

The Sixth Child by tvdspnlover

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Summary: Karmen moved to Hawkins as soon as she heard that a child like her might be in danger. On her search to find Eleven, she makes new friends, enemies and maybe even love. At the same time she is battling against herself to stop her powers from destroying everyone around her. Will she be able to help save Hawkins from the Upside Down? Steve/OC. Some Billy/OC. OFF HIATUS!

1. Welcome To Hawkins

20th September 1983

Karmen took a deep breath as she walked up the stairs of Hawkins High, fidgeting nervously with her bag strap. She had been to eleven different schools in the past six years, but this was different. She was here for a reason. Karmen quickened her pace when she noticed the reception desk, hoping to get her first day over with as quickly as possible.

"Hi, I'm Karmen, just starting today" She smiled at the woman at the desk.

"Karmen Dixon?" The woman replied, as she took a moment too long to answer.

"...Oh, yes. That's me" Karmen grinned, falsely.

She mentally slapped herself for forgetting her false surname so quickly. She couldn't afford to screw this up. The woman soon handed her some books and a timetable, sending her off to her first class, which was only a few doors down the corridor. Karmen groaned when she saw the lesson had already started.

"Ah, you must be the new student" Her teacher announced, as she entered the room.

Instantly, there were around thirty eyes on her, trying to sum her up. She had tried to make herself look as inconspicuous and average as possible, and seeing how everyone seemed to lose interest in her after a few seconds, it seemed to have worked. All but one boy in the corner, who looked away quickly when she caught him staring.

"Well you're just in time for algebra, lucky you. Back of the class please" The teacher instructed her, as she nodded.

The lesson was uneventful, as were her next two classes. It was soon lunch, and she drifted over to the library, hoping to fade into the background as much as possible. Or that was the plan before she

bumped straight into someone, almost falling over.

"-Shit. Sorry" Karmen sighed, as she steadied herself.

She saw she had knocked over a bundle of things the person had been holding, and bent down to pick them up. She found numerous photos among textbooks, some of wildlife, some of people.

"Nice pictures" She exclaimed, finally looking up at the person, who had also bent down.

"Thanks" A reply came, with an awkward smile.

She frowned when she realised it was the boy who had stared at her from her first class. He quickly gathered his things, retreating from her, when she spotted a photo he had missed.

"Hey, cheekbones!" She called after him, thinking it an appropriate name as it was she first noticed about him.

"Huh?" He questioned, turning around.

"Your forgot something" She informed him, waving the photo around.

He hurried over, about to grab the photo, when she pulled it back at the last moment.

"What's your name?" She queried.

"Jonathan...Byers" He told her, nervously.

"Karmen" She announced, as she handed him the picture.

"No last name?" Jonathan frowned.

"Uh...it's..." Karmen trailed off, racking her brain for the godforsaken name.

"You don't remember your last name?" Jonathan asked, a small smile on his face.

"...It's just be a long day" Karmen shrugged it off.

"It's noon" Jonathan retorted, feeling more confident than usual.

"Hey! I'm the new girl you're supposed to be nice to me" Karmen insisted, hitting his shoulder.

The pair both let out a quiet laugh, finding a comfortable silence between them.

Karmen waved to Jonathan at the end of the day, after their lesson was over. She walked down the steps of the school with a smile before shaking her head, she wasn't there to make friends. She needed to find Eleven. That was it.

"Hey, hobo!" Two boys from her year shouted behind her, as she opened her locker.

She rolled her eyes in response, shoving her middle finger at them, which only made them laugh harder.

"Don't let them bother you" A quiet voice said from her side.

"I won't. They're just dicks" Karmen shrugged, as she turned to look at who had spoken.

It was a ginger girl from a few of her classes, but she couldn't remember her name.

"You're new here, right?" The girl asked.

"As if I could forget" Karmen sighed.

"Don't worry, next week they'll be onto the next big thing" The girl reassured her.

"I'm Karmen" She announced, as she closed her locker.

"Barb" The other girl nodded.

"Where's that girl you're always hanging around with? Small, petite?" Karmen inquired.

"Making out with Steve Harrington in the toilets" Barb confessed, with an eye roll.

"Ooo, fancy" Karmen laughed.

The girls got into a light conversation when the girl they had been talking about walked over, a guy had his arm wrapped around her shoulder.

"Hey Barb...who's this?" The girl questioned, as they approached.

"Karmen. New girl, etc" Karmen shrugged.

"Nice clothes" The guy, who Karmen presumed was Steve, mocked.

She knew her clothes were ugly, they didn't fit her and were dirt cheap, but it was all she had, and she was sick of people making fun of her.

"Nice hair" Karmen retorted.

"Wha...There's nothing wrong with my hair" Steve insisted.

"Not seeing much right with it either" Karmen went on, as Barb had to stifle a giggle.

"Well...I...there's not much right with that outfit" Steve stuttered.

"Ouch, that really got me put in my place" Karmen said, sarcastically.

"I'll see you later" Steve told the girl, as he pressed a quick kiss to her lips and retreated.

"Steve's really not that bad" The girl told her.

"If you say so...?" Karmen trailed off.

"Oh, I'm Nancy" She greeted.

Soon it was Friday and Karmen was grateful that she'd be able to relax for the weekend, and really start her search. She was walking down the corridor, off to her last lesson, when a boy caught her eye.

Or more what was surrounding him did. There was black smoke flying all around him, making her come to a halt. She quickly realised she was the only one who could see it, and wondered what it meant. Could it be a warning, she thought to herself? She watched as the boy and his friends walked past her, frowning at the strange look she was giving them.

"Hey...what's wrong?" Nancy questioned, as she spotted Karmen standing in the middle of the hallway.

"Who was that kid?" Karmen inquired, pointing to the group.

"Which one?" Nancy asked.

"The one with the bowl cut" She answered.

"Oh, that's Will Byers. He's best friends with my brother" Nancy told her.

"Wait, as in Jonathan's brother?" Karmen queried.

"Uh, yes. How'd you know him?" Nancy frowned.

"I met him on my first day. He seemed nice" She divulged, as they began walking.

"Are you really sure you want to hang around with him? He's a bit... weird" Nancy stated.

"He's shy" Karmen corrected.

"Shy and weird" Nancy insisted.

"Well he doesn't seem as big of a douchebag as most guys at this school" Karmen shrugged.

"Why are you so defensive of him?" Nancy questioned, a small smile on her face.

"I'm not!" Karmen exclaimed.

"Sure" Nancy laughed, a knowing smile on her face.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this first chapter! Please send in reviews with any feedback you have on this story and chapter. Do you like my ideas? Is there anything in particular you want to see? Thank you!

2. Will's Disappearance

7th November 1983

Karmen had been living in Hawkins for over a month, and had still found nothing about the girl she had been searching for. She was beginning to wonder if her information had been wrong, as nothing strange had happened in the town for decades. She had wanted so badly to find Eleven, but now she was questioning whether the girl even existed. She walked into her third class of the day, sitting down in her seat with a sigh. She turned to her right, expecting Jonathan to be there and frowned when he wasn't. Weird, she thought to herself.

"Class, listen up please. I know some of you may have heard some rumours going around so I want us all to get our facts straight. Last night Will Byers went missing. That is all we know. I don't want to hear anyone making up anything, and I especially don't want to hear anyone harassing his brother, got it?" The teacher announced, as some of the kids in the class nodded.

Karmen frowned as she remembered the strange aura she had seen around Will, and realised it might have been connected to his disappearance. The moment class was finished, she rushed over to Jonathan's house, and after over an hour, she found herself walking up the driveway. She suddenly realised how strange it was to show up, but she needed information. Biting her lip, she knocked on the door softly, surprised when it was ripped open a moment later.

"Will?" A distressed looking woman cried.

"Uh...Ms. Byers?" Karmen suggested.

"Yes, who are you?" Ms. Byers frowned.

"I...um, go to Hawkins High. I guess I just wanted to come see how you were doing" Karmen stuttered.

"How I'm doing?! My son's missing!" Ms. Byers exclaimed.

"I-I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come" Karmen stated, taking a step back.

"Karmen?" Jonathan called out, after hearing her voice from the kitchen.

"Hey" Karmen nodded.

"Oh...you know her?" Ms. Byers questioned.

"Yeah. We're in the same class" Jonathan told her.

"I'm sorry I shouldn't have shouted at you" Ms. Byers said, feeling guilty.

"It's fine" Karmen shook her head.

"Would you like to come in?" Ms. Byers inquired.

"Oh...uh..." Karmen trailed off.

"We could use some help making the flyers" Ms. Byers suggested, as Karmen nodded stepping inside.

"How'd you get here?" Jonathan asked, remembering how far away from the school they lived.

"I walked" Karmen shrugged.

"Was there a reason you wanted to see us?" Ms. Byers frowned.

"I might...uh, it's nothing" Karmen stopped herself.

"No, what is it?" Ms. Byers queried.

"I actually had a job in the past finding people and I guess I thought I could help" Karmen admitted.

"A job? You're can't even be sixteen" Ms. Byers exclaimed.

"It wasn't exactly...legal" Karmen confessed.

"You're saying you think you could find Will?" Joyce realised.

"I could give it a try" Karmen stated.

"How?" Jonathan frowned.

"My methods are a little weird" Karmen admitted.

Ten minutes later, Karmen was sitting on their couch with a shirt of Will in her hands, after asking for something that belonged to him.

"So you're like a psychic?" Ms. Byers inquired.

"Not exactly...I just get feelings about things" Karmen shrugged.

Karmen then closed her eyes, as she relaxed her body, letting her thoughts drift away. She felt her mind scour Hawkins searching for Will's aura, but found nothing. After a few minutes she opened her eyes, deciding that it was useless to keep trying.

"I can't..." She trailed off, when she noticed something in the room.

"What? What is it?!" Ms. Byers questioned, as Karmen stood up.

She walked into the kitchen to get a closer look at what she was seeing. It was a dim blue light that she recognised, but it was barely there. She frowned, not understanding what it meant as Will was not in the room.

"It's almost like he's here" Karmen announced.

"...Like a ghost?" Jonathan cried.

"No...like he's lost somewhere" Karmen exclaimed.

She let out a gasp when suddenly the black aura that she had seen following Will before, approached and the blue aura ran out of the room. Karmen ran to open the door as she watched the two-aura's run away. Suddenly the street lights began to flicker and one by one they blew up, shocking the three of them.

"What was that?" Jonathan questioned.

"I don't know" Karmen shook her head.

The next day Karmen was standing by her locker in deep thought, as Barb and Nancy approached her.

"Hey, where were you yesterday? You missed fourth period" Barb stated.

"I went to the Byers house. To pay my respects I guess" Karmen shrugged.

"Yeah, it's really sad what's happened to his brother" Barb sighed.

"Who are we talking about? Freaky and his little brother freakier?" Tommy H. suggested, as he approached.

"Wow, so classy" Karmen rolled her eyes.

"Why should I care about them? They're not my friends" Tommy H. explained.

"It's a little something called common decency. You should try it sometime" Karmen said, giving him a fake smile.

"Ugh, why do you even hang around with this loser, Nancy?" Carol questioned, as ever not far behind Tommy.

"Must be my charming personality" Karmen shrugged.

"Oh, are you talking about me?" Steve suggested, as he slung his arm around Nancy's shoulder.

"I don't think the word moron left my lips so...no" Karmen told him, as Bab giggled.

"You wound me...Now onto more important matters. My dad has left town for a conference and my mum has gone with him because she doesn't trust him. So, are you in?" Steve announced.

"In for what?" Nancy questioned.

"No parents. Big house..." Carol trailed off.

"A party?" Nancy realised.

"Ding ding ding" Carol laughed.

"It's Tuesday" Nancy exclaimed, as even Karmen had to cringe.

"Come on. It'll be low key. It'll just be us. Are you in or out?" Steve insisted.

"Okay...as long as Barb and Karmen can come" Nancy bargained.

"Sure, why not" Steve shrugged, as Tommy and Carol rolled their eyes.

"Oh God. Look" Carol said, as they all looked over to see Jonathan.

"That's depressing" Steve sighed.

"Should we say something?" Nancy suggested.

"I don't think he speaks" Carol mocked.

"How much do you want to bet he killed him?" Tommy grinned, as Karmen glared at the boy.

"Shut up" Steve scolded, nudging him.

Karmen watched as Nancy walked over to Jonathan and they began to converse awkwardly. She watched as they both shared a chuckle about something, as the bell rang.

"Looks like Nancy might be moving onto your boyfriend, loser" Tommy suggested, as the group walked away.

Karmen shook her head, not thinking in a million years that Nancy and Jonathan would become a thing. And besides, she wouldn't care.

"I think..." She thought aloud, with a frown.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I'm really glad that people are reading this story, as I wasn't sure what reception it would get. I thought I'd clarify that at the beginning this story is going to be leaning more Jonathan/OC but Steve/OC are endgame at

the moment. Please leave a review:)

MarinaBee7462: Thank you:) I hope you like this chapter!

Guest: That's definitely the plan at the moment!

Guest: Aw, thank you so much:)

BrolbyvsSolby: Aw, thank you! Here's the next chapter:)

3. Steve's Party

"Hey, Jonathan" Karmen exclaimed, tapping on the boy's window before he could drive away.

"Oh...hey" Jonathan replied, awkwardly.

"I didn't get a chance to talk to you earlier. About yesterday" Karmen stated, as he got out of the car.

"Did you really see Will?" Jonathan blurted out.

"Maybe...it's hard to say..." Karmen trailed off.

"What happened with those lights...I don't even know what to think" Jonathan admitted.

"I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry" Karmen shook her head.

"No. It's fine...it was just weird, that's all" Jonathan told her.

"That's me all over really" She chuckled, nervously.

"Me too" Jonathan said, giving her a lopsided smile.

"We make quite the pair" Karmen grinned.

Her smile faded a moment later when she spotted a familiar face at the side of the parking lot.

"I...uh, I should get going" Karmen stuttered, as she began to walk away.

"Right" Jonathan nodded, as she rushed off behind him.

Karmen gave the man a death glare once she was finally in front of him.

"What the hell are you doing here?" She whispered, in disbelief.

"It's the girl" The man answered.

"Bullshit. Your information was wrong. There is no girl. You were just looking for some easy cash, huh?" Karmen accused.

"She's escaped" The man blurted out.

"What?" Karmen frowned.

"Eleven. She escaped from the building yesterday. No one has any idea where she is. But they're searching everywhere" He explained.

"I need to find her before they do" Karmen insisted.

"Are you crazy? You start asking around about her, then they're going to figure out who you are pretty fast" The man told her.

"What? You have no idea-" Karmen started, but he cut her off.

"Oh please, do you think I'm stupid? You're the one that got away. We've all heard about you. It's not hard to connect the dots. Why do you think I'm helping you?" He went on.

"I've been filling your pockets with cash" Karmen stated.

"Look, I feel guilty about what I've done. Hell, it keeps me awake at night. And yes, maybe I am just being selfish, but you need me and my intel" He exclaimed.

"If anyone followed you here..." Karmen trailed off, shaking her head.

"They didn't. I'm invisible at that place. And besides, I had to come. You weren't answering my calls" He accused.

"Fine, I'll pick up next time. But you need to go. Now" Karmen instructed, as he nodded, walking away.

"Ugh, I can't believe you guys roped me into this" Karmen groaned, from where she was in the back seat of Barb's car.

"If I have to suffer you do too" Barb replied.

Secretly, Karmen was glad she had been invited. She needed to be

seen doing normal teenage things, otherwise she would start to stand out.

"How'd you get around your parents letting you out?" Nancy asked her.

"Uh...they're quite lenient" Karmen shrugged.

"Do we have to go? We could easily just turn back still?" Barb suggested.

"You said you were going to go. You're coming. We're going to have a great time" Nancy insisted.

"Nance, he just wants to get into your pants" Barb informed her.

"No, he doesn't" Nancy shook her head.

"Yeah, he definitely does" Karmen agreed with Barb.

"He invited you to his house. His parents aren't home. Come on, you're not this stupid" Barb stated.

"Tommy H. and Carol are going to be there" Nancy exclaimed.

"They've been having sex since like, seventh grade. It'll probably be like a big orgy" Barb suggested.

"Gross" Nancy grimaced.

"Now there's an image I'll never get out of my head" Karmen sighed.

"You can be like my guardian, all right? Like make sure I don't get drunk or do anything stupid" Nancy went on, taking off her top.

"Is that a new bra?" Barb said, raising an eyebrow.

"No" Nancy replied, as Karmen scoffed.

"Someone clearly wants to get laid tonight" She snickered, as she exited the car.

"Barb, chill" Nancy insisted, once they got to Steve's front door.

"Hello ladies" Steve grinned at them, as Karmen had to stop herself from rolling her eyes.

Karmen stared around in awe, as everyone went into the kitchen. She was in disbelief that a place that big was someone's home.

"Impressive, right?" Steve smirked at her, seeing the look on her face.

"So just you, your mum, and your dad live here?" Karmen wanted to clarify.

"Uh...yeah" Steve frowned.

"Wait, what is that room?" She questioned, pointing to a room down the hallway.

"The laundry room?" Steve stated.

"You have a whole room just to do laundry?" Karmen said, looking at him in disbelief.

He just shrugged in response, as they walked outside to reveal a massive swimming pool.

"Holy shit...you people have too much money" Karmen rolled her eyes.

Karmen watched as the group descended into a game of piercing a can of beer and chugging it down. Nancy spotted her standing near Barb, as a smile erupted on her face.

"Karmen, you next" Nancy insisted.

"...Alright, let me show you how it's really done" Karmen smirked.

She grabbed the knife and can from Nancy's hand and began to slice open the can at the bottom the whole way around. She then lifted it above her head as she bent the can, allowing the beer to fall into her mouth within a matter of seconds. As she took one last gulp, she threw the can in the air, a satisfied smile on her face.

"Damn" Steve exclaimed, raising an eyebrow.

The others soon began to cheer and clapped her on the back, as she wiped the remnants from her chin.

"Barb, come on" Nancy said to her friend.

"Oh, no..." Barb trailed off, shaking her head.

"Come on, it's fun" Nancy told her, waving the can in her face.

"Nance, she doesn't want to" Karmen stated.

"Just give it a shot" Nancy insisted, placing the can in her hand.

Reluctantly, Karmen passed her the knife, as Barb started attempting to pierce the can. Her fingers slipped, and she ended up cutting her own hand, letting out a hiss.

"Gnarly" Tommy H. exclaimed.

"Shit, Barb" Karmen cried, rushing over to her friend.

"Are you okay?" Nancy questioned.

"Yeah" Barb nodded.

"Barb, you're bleeding" Nancy went on.

"I'm fine. Where's your bathroom?" Barb asked.

"Oh, it's past the kitchen. Down on the left" Steve pointed in the general direction.

"Thanks" Barb dismissed, running off.

"Hey, wait up" Karmen said, as she started walking after her friend.

"Nancy, are you coming?" Karmen suggested.

Before Nancy could reply Tommy had pushed Carol into the pool, causing Nancy to turn away from her with a laugh. Annoyed, Karmen walked away, confused at the way that Nancy was acting. She found

Barb running her hand under a tap, tears in her eyes.

"Stings, huh?" Karmen announced.

"Yeah, you could say that" Barb shrugged, not talking about the cut.

"She'll come around. She just likes the attention" Karmen insisted.

"Or maybe she's not who I thought she was" Barb sighed.

"She likes a boy. It's pretty hard to get through to someone when all they can think about is that" Karmen went on.

"I'll never be like that" Barb shook her head.

"You'd be surprised" Karmen stated.

"Do you like someone?" Barb questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"What? No" Karmen shook her head.

"Really? Because you seem to like hanging around with Jonathan" Barb accused.

"We're just...friends, I guess" Karmen told her, as she grabbed a small towel and wrapped it around her thumb.

"That's just what Nancy used to say" Barb mocked her, with a smile.

"It's not going to happen. Trust me" Karmen shook her head.

Author's Notes: I hope you all liked this chapter! Sorry that it took so long to update. I'm really enjoying writing how Karmen's relationships are developing with these characters, and I hope you are too:) Please leave a review!

Micky-Moo: Thanks for the review! I hope I do the first season justice:)

Anna Kate: Aw, thank you:) I hope you like this chapter.

musicnlyrics: I'm really glad you like it! Enjoy this chapter:)

teenwolfismylife101: Aw, thank you so much! That really means a lot to me:)

walisi: Here's the next chapter, enjoy!

Guest: Thank you:) I hope you like this chapter!

4. Maybe He's Not Such a Jerk

Later that night, Karmen was sitting by the pool with Barb, as they both bitched about how Nancy had ditched them. Karmen frowned when she heard a rustling in the woods, near to where they were sitting.

"Did you hear that?" She inquired, as Barb shook her head.

"I'm going to check it out" She announced, as she stood up.

"What? Karmen, you can't! It could be dangerous" Barb insisted.

"Or it could be Will" Karmen suggested, as she began to wander off.

"Be careful" Barb called after her.

She slowly walked into the nearby trees and picked up a nearby branch, when she heard a twig snap to the side of her.

"Hey! Who's there? I'm warning you, I'm armed...sort of" She trailed off.

The shadowy figure took a run for it, as she raised her arm and through the branch at them, hitting them in the back, as they fell.

"Got ya" She smirked, as she ran after them.

She crouched to the ground and rolled them over, shocked when she saw it was Jonathan.

"Jonathan? What the hell are you doing here?" Karmen inquired.

"I...I was looking for Will" He replied.

"Why didn't you answer me? Jesus, I could have killed you" Karmen told him.

"With a stick?" Jonathan laughed.

"Hey, it knocked you over, didn't it?" Karmen said, raising an

eyebrow.

She took his hand in hers and helped pull him up. She then realised just how close they were to each other and realised that she was now blushing.

"Thanks" Jonathan smiled at her, as she realised she was still holding his hand.

"Uh, yeah. No problem" She shrugged, pulling her hand away.

"Well um...have a nice night" Jonathan said, awkwardly.

"You too...I'll be thinking about you...I mean, about your brother, you know..." Karmen stuttered, her blush deepening.

With a nod, Jonathan turned and left, leaving Karmen rolling her eyes at herself. She then ventured back into Steve's backyard and frowned when she saw that Barb wasn't where she left her.

"Barb? Hey, where did you..." Karmen trailed off, when she spotted a familiar black aura just above the swimming pool.

Suddenly she heard a scream and realised it must have been Barb. She frantically looked around, but she couldn't find her friend anywhere.

"Barb?!" She yelled, as she heard the cries become more desperate.

She thought she saw something at the bottom of the swimming pool, so without another thought, she dived in. When she got to the bottom, she searched around, but once again couldn't find anything. As she started to feel lightheaded, she rose to the surface, calling out her friend's name. Pulling herself out of the pool, she jumped upright, about to run into the house to tell the others, when she came to a stop. Standing in front of her was a creature like she had never seen before, it didn't even have a face. Just rows and rows of razor sharp teeth. With a cry, she tried to run away, but slipped and fell, her head banging onto the floor, as everything went dark.

"-men? Karmen? Hey!" She heard a voice shouting, as her eyes started

to flutter open.

Once her eyes began to focus, she saw Steve Harrington hovering over her, worry on his face.

"What...what's going on?" She exclaimed, her hand going to her head.

"Hey, don't try to move. I think you...oh, holy shit. Your bleeding" Steve stated, as she pulled her hand away to see blood.

"It's fine...just a scratch" Karmen insisted, as she pulled herself up.

"Just take it slowly, okay? God, your freezing" Steve told her, as he placed his hand on her shoulder.

"What...time is it?" She questioned.

"Just gone seven I think" He replied, as Karmen started to shiver.

"Let's get you inside, all right?" Steve suggested, as she nodded.

He helped her back into his house, his arm wrapped around her shoulder's, supporting her in case she fell. He felt guilty that she had been hurt at his party, and he hadn't even realised. Once she was inside, Steve all but cocooned her in numerous blankets, which she was thankful for.

"Have you been out there all night?" Steve asked, as she nodded.

"I'm going to call for an ambulance" He announced, as he walked over to his landline.

"No! No, it's fine. I'm fine" She shouted, surprising him.

"You hit your head...you could have a concussion or something...I think" He frowned.

"I feel fine, just a little cold" She shrugged off.

Steve then placed his hand on her forehead, finding that she was very cold, and bit his lip.

"I'll get you some water" He suggested, as he came back only a few

seconds later.

"Thanks" She mumbled, as she downed the drink.

"Shit, I thought you were dead when I went out there" Steve shook his head.

"Oh my God...where's Barb?" Karmen questioned, her memories suddenly flooding back.

"I don't know...she went home last night, didn't she?" Steve stated.

"No...I heard her scream and..." She trailed off, as she remembered the creature.

"I need to find her" Karmen exclaimed, standing up and instantly feeling dizzy.

"Hey, stop. You need to sit down. Look I won't call 911, if you rest here. Deal?" Steve went on, as she reluctantly nodded.

"Why do you care suddenly?" Karmen queried.

"Look, I might be a jerk, all right but...I'm not a bad guy" Steve shrugged.

Karmen nodded, realising she may have misjudged Steve Harrington.

Steve eyes widened when he spotted Karmen in school later that day, standing by her locker.

"What the hell?" He exclaimed, as he walked up to her.

"What?" She frowned.

"What are you doing here?! You were supposed to stay at my house and rest!" Steve exclaimed.

"I had to come and see if Barb was here" Karmen replied.

"What about your head?" Steve inquired, with a concerned look.

"It still hurts, but it's fine. I'm fine, really" Karmen insisted, as Steve sighed.

"Has Barb been in?" Steve questioned.

"No, no one's heard from her at all. I'm going to go see her parents after school" Karmen announced.

"Who's parents?" Nancy questioned, as she overheard them talking.

"Have you seen Barb since last night?" Karmen asked her.

"No, she left with you, didn't she?" Nancy shrugged.

"I never left" Karmen replied.

"What?" Nancy inquired.

"She hit her head. She's been out in the cold all night...and shouldn't be in school today" Steve explained.

"Oh my God, are you okay?" Nancy cried.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Thanks for checking up on me and Barb this morning" Karmen said, sarcastically.

"What does that mean?" Nancy inquired.

"Nothing. I just hope your 'great' night was worth it" Karmen sighed, as she began walking away.

"Are you going home now?" Steve called after her.

"I'm going to Barb's house. Are you coming, Nancy?" She suggested.

"I...I can't ditch school...really..." Nancy trailed off, not wanting to get in trouble if Barb's parents started asking questions.

"Whatever" Karmen rolled her eyes, and walked away.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Sorry I haven't updated for almost a month, but I've had bad Flu and didn't feel like

writing. We get to see a glimpse of that protective side of Steve in this chapter, as he feels responsible for Karmen getting hurt. Please leave a review:)

arapyanime: Yeah, it's going to be fun to see how Karmen changes the storyline.

Micky-Moo: Thank you! Here's the new chapter:)

musicnlyrics: Thank you so much:) You're welcome!

PsychoBeachGirl88: I'm really glad you like this story:) Enjoy the new update!

5. The Fake Body

She soon found out that Barb had not come home and informed her parents that she had not seen her since she had disappeared. Of course, Barb's parents called the police straight away, but she feigned having some amnesia, which was believable due to her head wound. She went back to the school at the end of the day and spotted Nancy and the others.

"Hey...what's going on?" Karmen queried, seeing that they were grouped around Jonathan's car.

"This creep was spying on us last night" Carol informed her.

"What?" Karmen frowned, as Steve handed her a group of pictures.

She was in most of them, there was even one of Nancy undressing upstairs. She looked at the last picture and saw it was one of Barb on her own.

"What the hell?! You were spying on us?" Karmen shouted, throwing the pictures in his face.

"I...I was looking for my brother" Jonathan retorted.

"Bullshit! Did you do something to Barb?" Karmen inquired.

"What?! No. Of course not" Jonathan told her.

"Really? Cause these pictures show you were the last person to see her. I think the police better see this" Karmen stated.

"Wait, the police know about Barb?" Nancy questioned.

"They know she's missing, but don't worry I didn't say anything else. Faked amnesia. So, your secret party is safe" Karmen explained, as she saw they all sighed in relief.

"Look, I swear I didn't-" Jonathan started, reaching out to touch Karmen's arm.

"Don't touch me!" She shouted, as she shoved him back so hard that he fell over.

"See you can tell he knows that it was wrong, but that's the thing about perverts. It's hardwired into them, they just can't help themselves. So...we'll just have to take away his toy" Steve exclaimed, as he stood in between Karmen and Jonathan.

"No, please not the camera!" Jonathan cried.

"Hold up, wait" Tommy laughed, holding him back.

"Hey, it's okay Tommy" Steve smiled, as he held out the camera to Jonathan.

"Here you go, man" Steve stated, as he then dropped the camera inches from Jonathan's hand.

Karmen bit her lip, feeling bad for Jonathan, but at the same time he deserved it.

"Come on, let's go. The game's about to start" Steve insisted, feeling guilty.

"I thought you were my friend" Karmen scoffed, as Jonathan looked away from her.

She walked away with the others, as she spotted Nancy picking up one of the photos, guessing it might have been the one of her undressing.

"Hey Nance, come on!" Steve called over to her.

"I'll meet you in a sec...I...I just want to destroy this photo" She answered, as he nodded.

"That was kind of a dick move, Steve" She informed him, as they walked away.

"He was taking pictures of us! He had a photo of Nancy naked...its gross" Steve grumbled.

"God, I'm such an idiot. I even saw him last night, but I didn't think he'd...you know" She sighed.

"I don't think he had anything to do with Barb, Karmen" Steve told her.

"I know. I'm just angry" Karmen replied.

"Shit. I feel sort of bad for destroying his camera. Do you think it was a present or something?" Steve questioned.

"You're angry too" She shrugged.

"Thanks, by the way. For not getting us in trouble with the police" Steve smiled at her, as she nodded.

Karmen got a phone call that night from Nancy. Will Byers body had been found. She felt responsible in a way, she had seen that thing following him around before he was taken and now he was dead. And after what had happened with Jonathan...she was feeling guilty. She had found out he was at the coronary office and had walked straight there.

"Hey" She announced, as she approached him.

"Uh, hey. What are you doing here?" Jonathan asked.

"I heard about Will...and well, I wanted to see you" Karmen confessed.

"I'm sorry about yesterday, and the pictures and-" Jonathan was cut off, as she came to sit down next to him.

"Hey, don't even worry about that, okay? It's not important" Karmen shook her head.

"I just...I don't even know why I did it. I really did go out there just looking for Will" Jonathan insisted.

"It's fine. Really" Karmen told him, as she placed her hand over his.

"Is your mum still in there?" Karmen asked.

"Yeah...she's having a hard time accepting it" Jonathan admitted.

"She's lost her son...I can't even imagine" Karmen sighed.

"I can't believe he's gone" Jonathan cried.

"Hey, it's okay" Karmen said, as she pulled him into a hug.

"I should have protected him" Jonathan insisted, as he wrapped his arms around her.

"There's nothing you could have done, Jonathan. It was an accident" Karmen replied.

"I don't know what I'm going to do..." He trailed off.

"Stop, okay? Look at me. You're gonna be okay. So is your mum. You're both going to get through this" Karmen explained.

"How do you know?" Jonathan couldn't help but scoff.

"I lost my brother...when I was younger" Karmen confessed.

"I...I'm sorry, I didn't know" Jonathan sniffed, as she nodded.

"Who's this?" A gruff voice questioned, from behind them.

"Oh, this is my friend" Jonathan told the police officer.

"Karmen, right? You reported Barbara Holland missing?" He queried.

"Yeah. Is there any news?" She asked, as he shook his head.

"I'll go see how your mum is doing" Karmen offered, as she walked away.

"So, uh, 'friend' right?" Hopper said, doing quotations marks with his fingers.

"What?" Jonathan frowned.

"Oh, nothing. I just never hugged any of my friends that way" Hopper replied.

"Ms Byers?" Karmen called out, as she saw Joyce staring through the window into the morgue.

"Oh, Karmen. It's...it's good to see you" She smiled at her.

"I'm so sorry about Will. I shouldn't have given you false hope...I guess I got it wrong" Karmen sighed.

"No, you didn't. Will's alive!" Joyce insisted.

"But...his body..." Karmen trailed off.

"It's not his. No birthmark" Joyce explained.

"What do you mean?" Karmen questioned.

"He has a birthmark on his right arm. That thing doesn't" Joyce went on, as Karmen looked into the morgue to see Will's body.

"Where's the coroner?" Karmen queried.

"He's gone to get some paper work" Joyce informed her.

"You're not going to believe it's him unless you have proof, are you?" Karmen suggested, as she shook her head.

"...I'm so going to regret this" Karmen sighed, as she took out her pocket knife.

She then used it to help jack open the locked door and entered the morgue.

"What are you doing?" Joyce whispered.

"Finding out for sure" Karmen stated, as she stepped closer.

She took a deep breath as she approached the body, finding her stomach churned as she looked at the boy's face. But one thing hit her. No smell. Nothing at all. She slowly moved closer and pulled the

sheet lower and touched his arm. She frowned when she found his arm wasn't stiff. She held his arm up and found that she could move it. There was no rigor mortis, it was some sort of dummy, not a human body. It wasn't Will.

"Who the hell are you?" The coroner shouted, as she turned around.

"Oh, no one. I just wanted to pay my respects" She told them, as she rushed out.

"So?" Joyce asked, as she approached.

"It's not Will. It's not even human. It's like rubber or something. It's a fake" Karmen explained.

"I knew it" Joyce cried.

"You need to be smart about this, okay? No one is going to believe you. They're just going to think you're crazy" Karmen went on.

"I don't care. Jonathan! Jonathan!" Joyce called out, as she rushed to find her son.

Karmen bit her lip, worried that she might have just made things worse. However, something was definitely going on and she didn't know how yet, but Eleven was involved.

Author's Notes: I hope you enjoyed this chapter! While Karmen felt violated and angry about the pictures that Jonathan had taken, she thought his brother had just died, so she didn't feel like it mattered anymore, if that makes sense. Just thought I'd clear that up. Please leave a review:)

musicnlyrics: You're welcome:) Yeah, I love showing Steve's protectiveness which is going to show more and more as he and Karmen grow closer.

Micky-Moo: Yeah, Steve was definitely on Karmen's side, especially as he felt responsible for her getting hurt. I hope you liked this chapter:)

SSJGamerYT: Aw, thank you so much:)

6. Friends?

Karmen bit her lip as she listened to the Vicar at Will's funeral, feeling out of place. She'd never even had a conversation with the boy, but then again most people didn't seem to have had. She turned her head when she saw a group of young girls all crying crocodile tears, and had to force herself not to roll her eyes. The service was soon over, as everyone started to walk away, meaning that Joyce soon spotted Karmen.

"Karmen! I'm so glad you're here" Joyce smiled at her, warmly.

"I thought I should pay my respects" Karmen explained.

"Can I talk to you...in private?" Joyce queried, as Karmen nodded.

They soon found shelter under a nearby tree, as Joyce looked around shiftily.

"I don't understand what's happening. Why would someone fake my boy's death?" Joyce inquired.

"I'm as lost as you are. I think there are a lot of puzzle pieces we're missing" Karmen told her.

"Everyone thinks I'm crazy" Joyce sighed.

"You're not. It's just...this whole situation is crazy. That's all" Karmen insisted.

"Thank you" Joyce replied, looking relieved.

"Do you know where Jonathan is? I'd like to talk to him" Karmen inquired.

"Um...he was here a minute ago" Joyce said, looking around.

"I'll go search" Karmen informed her, but Joyce stopped her.

"I don't mean to pry into my son's life but...is there something going on with you two?" Joyce asked, a hint of a smirk on her face.

"Uh...no. No, we're just friends" Karmen shrugged.

"Okay, okay" Joyce smiled, putting her hands up in mock defence.

"I'm just saying Jonathan would be lucky to have you" Joyce went on, as Karmen shook her head, fondly.

She soon found Jonathan, and frowned when she spotted Nancy sitting next to him. Her frown deepened when she saw Nancy hug him, as Karmen started to walk away. She was so confused. Nancy and Jonathan...it seemed so crazy only a few days ago. But now it seemed like the pair had grown close, and she wasn't going to let jealousy get in the way of that.

She was on her way back into the woods to look for Will and Barb, when she practically bumped into a familiar face. She would have fallen backwards, if the person hadn't reached out for her, pulling them towards them.

"Jesus, Steve. Were you trying to lunge at me or...?" Karmen exclaimed, as Steve sighed in response.

"Sorry, I was just...all in my head" Steve replied, realising he was still holding her, and let go.

"Girlfriend troubles?" Karmen suggested.

"What? No. Me and Nancy are great" Steve told her.

"Then why are you walking away from her house?" Karmen inquired.

"Well because...she didn't want to see me" Steve admitted.

"You know maybe you should just give her some space. I reckon her head's probably all over the place right now too" Karmen explained.

"She said there's still no word on Barb. I'm sorry. I know you two were close" Steve stated.

"She's not the first person I've lost...I doubt she'll be the last" Karmen mumbled, making Steve frown.

"I better go" Karmen said, a moment later, trying to change the subject.

"Where are you off to?" Steve questioned.

"The woods. Everyone else might have stopped looking for Barb, but I'm not" Karmen shrugged.

"I'll come with you" Steve insisted.

"You really don't have to-" Karmen started, but he cut her off.

"No, I want to. Seriously. It's partly my fault she's gone missing. I want to help" Steve informed her.

"Steve Harrington actually taking responsibility for something? Are you feeling okay?" Karmen mocked, as Steve rolled his eyes.

"I told you before. I'm not as big of a jerk as you think I am" Steve exclaimed.

They had been searching the woods for a couple of hours when Karmen noticed Steve was beginning to lag behind her.

"I'm not going to have to carry you, am I?" Karmen giggled.

"No...I'm all good" Steve panted, brushing it off.

"Let's stop for a few minutes" Karmen suggested.

"No, really. I'm great. Let's keep going" Steve insisted, not liking that a girl was showing him up.

"Well I'm actually tired so..." Karmen trailed off, coming to a stop.

"Oh, okay then. I mean if you need a rest" Steve stated, as Karmen tried not to laugh.

Karmen took a bottle of water out of her bag, and began to gulp it down seeing as it was a hot day.

"I'm thinking that maybe we should be looking for somewhere that

Barb might try to hide out. Somewhere she'd feel protected" Karmen suggested, as Steve gestured for her to pass him the water.

"Maybe even a place where someone might keep her locked up, it could...what? What is it?" Karmen questioned, when she saw Steve's face.

"Why does this water taste...peachy?" Steve inquired.

"Oh...my lip balm. Peach" Karmen shrugged.

"Wouldn't have taken you for a peach kinda girl" Steve smirked, as Karmen shook her head.

"Well what would you have expected?" Karmen queried, raising an eyebrow.

"I don't know...something icy" Steve replied.

"Oh, wow. Thanks" Karmen exclaimed.

"I don't mean it like that, it's just...you don't exactly seem to like me. Or pretty much anyone" Steve explained.

"Look, there's the same people in every school. The popular ones, the jocks, the nerds, the misfits, and the rebels. This school is no different" She shrugged.

"I'm not a stereotype, Karmen" Steve told her, a little hurt.

"Maybe not...but I'm not even going to be here long enough to find out" Karmen mumbled.

"What do you mean?" Steve frowned.

"Nothing" Karmen brushed it off.

"You know this whole mysterious thing...it's not really working" Steve went on.

"Look, you don't know me, Steve" Karmen insisted, starting to get angry.

"No, I don't. No one does. Because you don't let anyone in" Steve retorted.

"Oh, and what you're a psychologist now?" Karmen questioned, as Steve shook his head.

"What are you running from, Karmen?" Steve asked, a genuinely concerned look on his face.

Before either one of them could say anything else, Steve had noticed that Karmen's nose had begun to bleed.

"Holy shit...are you okay?" Steve inquired.

"Yeah, I'm fine" Karmen replied, as she wiped away the blood with a tissue.

Seconds later, she began to feel dizzy, as it felt like an invisible force was trying to knock her over. She would have fallen if Steve had not been there to catch her, placing his arms around her waist, and helping her to the ground.

"Hey, it's okay. Just stay still" Steve told her, as he touched her face, gently.

After a couple of minutes, Karmen's eyes stopped being so glazed over, and she began to feel better. Steve still had one hand touching Karmen's face, as he thumb softly stroked her cheek. Karmen's breath stuttered momentarily when her eyes connected with Steve's intense gaze. She quickly pulled away from him, and unconsciously licked her lips, making Steve's eyes travel there. They both shook their heads a little, feeling as if they had been in a trance for the last few minutes. Suddenly a young blonde girl, in a pink dress, ran past them, only missing Steve by a few inches.

"Hey! Watch it, kid" Steve shouted.

"What was she doing out here?" Karmen queried.

"I don't know...we should probably head back. It's getting late" Steve insisted, as Karmen nodded.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Really enjoying writing about Steve/Karmen's developing relationship and hopefully they'll be a lot more fluff to come. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Thanks for the review! I hope you like this chapter:)

7. Meeting Eleven

Steve walked her home after that, which shocked her, since her apartment was quite far away. All the time they walked she couldn't stop thinking about the blonde girl that ran past. What would a kid be doing out there all on her own?

"Oh, this is me" Karmen announced, when they neared a block of apartments.

"...This is where you live?" Steve gaped.

"Hey, it might not be five stars but...it's affordable" Karmen shrugged.

"Are your parents in?" Steve queried.

"Uh...they're probably out" She mumbled.

"Alright, well I said I'll walk you to your door...and this only your building so..." Steve trailed off, with a stupid grin.

"Well I hope you like mould" Karmen replied, opening the door with her keys.

She lived on the fourth floor, which was right at the top of the building, leaving them both a little out of breath.

"Thanks for today" Karmen smiled at him.

"Sure thing" He responded, a little awkwardly.

"I'll...uh, see you later" Steve stuttered, as Karmen nodded, letting herself into her apartment.

With a shake of her head she looked around the room, which consisted of one single bed, an armchair, and a cooker. There was a tiny bathroom to the right which had an even smaller shower inside. It wasn't much but it was hers. She knew she couldn't let anyone see where she lived as it would soon become apparent that she was living on her own, and that would cause too many questions.

It was the next day, and as she walking around town to get some food, she spotted her friends name up on the movie theatre. 'All the Right Moves – Staring Nancy the Slut Wheeler' it read, clearly being sprayed on recently. Karmen quickly rushed inside offering to clean it up, which the manager was more than happy to let her do. When she went back outside with a bucket of soapy water and a sponge, she spotted Nancy and cringed. Her face then morphed into a frown when she spotted Jonathan running after her.

"Hey...I'll have this off soon enough, don't worry" Karmen assured her.

"Who...do you know who did this?" Nancy asked, as Karmen shook her head.

"I got here like ten minutes ago..." She trailed off, as they all heard laughing down a nearby alleyway.

Nancy quickly ran off in that direction, as Karmen put the supplies on the ground. Jonathan noticed the cold look she had given him when she walked past and wondered what he had done. Karmen wasn't that surprised when she spotted Tommy, Carol, Steve and some other girl with them.

"Aw, hey there Princess!" Carol called out, as Nancy approached them.

"Hey, Nance-" Karmen was cut off, when Nancy slapped Steve, hard.

Karmen's eyes widened as everyone around them gasped in shock, surprised that Nancy was so bold.

"What is wrong with you?" Nancy spat out.

"What's wrong with me? What's wrong with you? I was worried about you. I can't believe I was actually worried about you" Steve scoffed.

"What are you talking about?" Nancy questioned.

"I wouldn't lie if I were you. You don't want to be known as the lying slut, do you?" Carol mocked.

"Do you want to be known as the girl with a scar on her face because she didn't know when to shut up?" Karmen threatened, standing in front of Nancy.

"Speak of the devil" Tommy grinned, as Jonathan approached them.

"You came by last night" Nancy realised.

"Ding, ding ding. Does she get a prize?" Carol queried, as Karmen glared at her.

"Look, I don't know what you think you saw but it wasn't like that" Nancy insisted.

"What, you just let him into your room to...study?" Steve suggested.

"Wait...what is going on here?" Karmen inquired, confused.

"Jonathan and Nancy were involved in another pervy photo session" Tommy told her.

"Seriously?" Karmen queried, turning around to Nancy and Steve.

"No. We were just..." Nancy trailed off.

"You were just what? Finish that sentence" Steve went on, as Nancy didn't reply.

Karmen scoffed at this and turned around angrily. Nancy knew that she had some sort of feelings for Jonathan, she couldn't believe her friend would have gone there with him.

"Go to hell Nancy" Steve spat out.

"Karmen...look, we can talk about this later" Jonathan exclaimed, as he raised his arm towards her.

"Don't!" Karmen yelled at him.

"Please, just come with us" Jonathan insisted, but she backed away.

"Hey, she said don't touch her!" Steve shouted, getting into Jonathan's personal space.

"You know what, Byers? I'm kind of impressed. I always took you for a queer, but I guess you're just a little screw up like your father. Oh, yes. That house is full of screw ups. You know I guess I shouldn't be surprised. A bunch of screw ups in your family" Steve called out, poking him in the back numerous times.

"Jonathan, leave it" Nancy said, when he came to a stop.

"I mean your mum...I'm not even surprised what happened to your brother" Steve went on.

"Steve, stop it!" Karmen told him, but he wouldn't.

"I'm sorry that I have to tell you, but the Byers, their family it's a disgrace to the entire-" Steve was cut off when Jonathan whipped his body around and smacked him in the face.

Steve then turned around angrily, and lunged at him, throwing them both onto a car, as the girls watched in shock. Steve then pushed Jonathan to the ground and threw himself on top of him.

"Steve, stop it!" Nancy insisted.

"This is ridiculous" Karmen shouted, as they fought on the ground.

Jonathan then kneed Steve, and punched him in the face, causing Steve to fall backwards. Tommy finally intervened, trying to hold Jonathan back.

"Hey, hey! Get out of here!" Steve told Tommy, who backed up.

Jonathan threw a punch Steve's way, who ducked just in time and was able to get a hit on Jonathan's face. However, this had left him open, which Jonathan took advantage of, hitting him twice in the face as Steve fell backwards. He then crawled on top of Steve, ready to cause more damage.

"Stop it! Jonathan, stop it!" Karmen cried.

It was like he wasn't even hearing her, as he continued to punch Steve in the face.

"Stop it!" Karmen screamed, as street lamp above them exploded with energy, as glass fell to the ground beside them.

This caused Jonathan to roll off of him, as he must have thought that there might be more glass to come. Karmen tried to control her breathing, surprised that her powers had gone so crazy suddenly, as she usually had such a good control on them. She looked around to see if anyone see if anyone had suspected her, when they heard a police car coming up from behind them.

"Oh shit!" Karmen exclaimed, as she started to back away, knowing she couldn't be caught by the police as they would ask too many questions.

Without another thought, she went running around the corner, desperate to get away from the scene.

She was surprised when she realised that she had ran almost all the way to the forest, having the irrational fear that they were still following her. She kept walking into the forest, wanting to clear her head a bit, when she heard shouting from far away. She soon spotted a group of boys on the cliff and noticed that two of them seemed to be in a fight. She started to climb up the cliff when she saw one of the boys standing perilously near towards the edge. Before Karmen could say anything, she saw the boy had jumped, as she let out a scream. She looked away from the scene, not wanting to see the boy plunge to his death, when she realised she hadn't heard anything. Karmen gasped when she turned to see the boy was now floating in mid-air, if by magic, when she realised what it meant.

"Eleven!" She cried, as she began running up the cliff as fast as she could.

She could see the boy was now being pulled up the cliff and knew the girl she had been searching for couldn't be too far. She reached the top of the cliff soon enough and spotted a group of kids, all hugging each other. She instantly recognised one of them, knowing there was only one girl she knew who had a buzzcut.

"Eleven" She exclaimed, happily, as she ran up the path.

The two boys with her seemed shocked by this, confused at how she knew their friends name. Eleven looked at her with a frown, as she sensed something familiar about the older girl.

"Eleven...it's me. Six" Karmen explained, as she rolled her sleeve up to show a 006.

"Six..." Eleven trailed off, as if trying to search her memories.

"Well, you used to call me Sparky" Karmen stated, as she kneeled beside them.

Eleven's eyes lit up with this, as she instantly lunged forward, hugging Karmen, who hugged her back just as tightly.

"It's okay. Everything's going to be okay now" Karmen tried to reassure her, rubbing circles on her back.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed that chapter! Now that Karmen has met Eleven she's going to be included a lot more in the storyline. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: She did feel a connection, as her nose bled when Eleven used her powers not far away, and she also felt faint when Eleven got closer to her. Sorry if that wasn't obvious:)

tazsgirl6969: Thanks for the review. I hope to update more regularly:)

8. On the Run

On the way back to Mike's house, Karmen tried to tell the kids everything. How she had moved to Hawkins to look for Eleven, how she had been held captive when she was younger just like her, and how she had been trying to help kids like them ever since she had escaped.

"So...you have powers then?" Dustin inquired, while Eleven was cleaning herself up.

"Yep" She nodded, awkwardly.

"Wait...wait. Let me guess. You can turn invisible" Dustin suggested.

"Uh...no. I don't think anyone can do that" She said, patting him on the shoulder, as she went to check on Eleven.

"Everything good?" She queried, opening the door and found Eleven and Mike standing suspiciously close to each other.

"Um, yes. Yep. Everything's good. Its' great" Mike stuttered, as Karmen frowned.

She let Eleven walk past her, but when Mike tried to she stood in front of the doorway.

"Mike. You know I'm friends with your sister, yeah?" Karmen started.

"Yeah?" Mike questioned.

"Well Eleven is basically my sister. So how do you think you'd feel if Nancy was oh I don't know, twelve, vulnerable, and some kid was hitting on her?" Karmen asked, as Mike gulped.

"...Not good?" Mike mumbled.

"Exactly. You get what I'm saying here, right?" Karmen said, smiling falsely.

"To wait a few years?" Mike replied.

"Precisely-Wait, no! That is not what I'm saying" Karmen rolled her eyes.

"Guys! It's Lucas. I think he's in trouble" Dustin called over to them.

"What if he's found the gate?" Dustin asked, as he handed Mike the walkie talkie.

"What gate?" Karmen inquired.

"The gate to the Upsidedown. Which El opened" Dustin explained.

"Right...is anything that you just said supposed to make sense?" Karmen questioned.

"It's where we think Will's being held" Mike told her.

"You've spoken to him?!" Karmen exclaimed, as Mike shushed her.

"I'm being shushed by twelve-year olds" Karmen sighed.

"What's he saying?" Mike inquired, as they heard Lucas shouting on the walkie talkie.

"I don't know. He's out of range" Dustin informed him.

"Give it to me. I might be able to boost the signal" Karmen offered.

"How?" Dustin frowned, as Karmen grabbed the walkie talkie.

As soon as she got hold of it, blue sparks began to erupt from the object, as Lucas's voice could be heard clearer.

"You need to slow down, kid. We can't understand you" Karmen said.

"What?! Who is this?" Lucas shouted.

"Karmen. It's not important right now. What's going on?" Karmen asked.

"The bad men are coming! All of them! Do you copy?" Lucas screeched down the phone.

"Mad men? What the hell does that mean?" Karmen inquired.

"Bad men" Mike gasped, as he ran upstairs.

"Okay...what?" Karmen asked.

"The bad men. They're coming for Eleven" Dustin told her, rushing up after Mike.

"Okay, come on. We need to go. Now" Karmen insisted, as she grabbed Eleven by the arm and took her to the back entrance.

"If anyone asks where I am, tell them I've left the country!" Mike exclaimed, as he ran to the door.

"Because you're mum's totally not going to worry now" Karmen sighed, as she ushered them all out of the door.

The kids grabbed the two bikes, with Eleven going on Mike's, but there was no room for Karmen.

"What about you?" Dustin asked.

"I'll distract them. Where should we meet?" Karmen inquired.

"The junk yard" Mike told her, as they began to speed off.

Karmen ran after them as they got to the front of the house and saw a group of men staring at them. Karmen instantly recognised one of them as Dr. Brenner and felt her hands ball into fists.

"Go. Now!" Karmen shouted at the kids, as they wheeled away.

"Hey! I've heard you've been looking for me?" Karmen called over to them.

"We're your family, Six. We're the only family you'll ever have" Dr. Brenner informed her.

"My name...is Karmen" She replied, as she held out her hand.

A dark blue orb began to grow from her palm, as a lighter blue flickered on the inside of the orb. It continued to grow as the men

behind Dr. Brenner started to back up.

"You don't want to do this" Dr. Brenner insisted, as she noticed the gun he was holding in his hand.

"I have been waiting a long time for this" Karmen smirked, as she threw the ball his way.

This caused a massive explosion that pushed every man back, and even upturned a few of the vans. Before any of them could even think about getting back up, she had run back towards the house and out of the back of the property.

"Find her" Dr. Brenner grimaced, as he sat up.

The kids were surprised when around an hour later, Karmen was running towards them, shouting about something.

"What is she saying?" Mike frowned.

"Hum?" Lucas suggested.

"Run! Helicopter!" Karmen exclaimed, as she got closer.

"Oh shit" Dustin gasped.

"Get the bikes under the bus" Karmen advised them, as they did so and they ran onto the abandoned bus.

"Get down. Get down" Karmen ordered, as they all hid from the helicopter above them.

A little later, they were all still hiding when suddenly they started to hear a noise. It sounded like a voice.

"Mike? Mike, are you there? I need you to answer" They heard a voice say over Mike's walkie talkie.

"Is that your sister?" Lucas queried.

"This is an emergency, Mike. Do you copy?" Nancy went on.

"Don't answer it" Mike said, as Lucas went to take the walkie talkie.

"She said it was an emergency" Lucas stated.

"What if it's a trick?" Mike asked.

"It's your sister!" Lucas insisted.

"What if the bad people kidnapped her?" Mike suggested, as Karmen's eyes widened.

"It does seem a bit strange" Karmen said, biting her lip.

"I need you to answer" Nancy stated.

"It's like Lando Calrissian. Don't answer" Dustin told them.

"Who?" Karmen frowned.

"Listen kid, this is the chief, if you're there pick up. We know you're in trouble and we know about the girl" Chief Hopper said into their walkie talkie.

"Why is she with the chief?" Lucas inquired.

"How the hell does he know about..." Dustin trailed off.

"We can protect you, we can help you, but you've got to pick up. Are you there? Do you copy? Over?" Hopper insisted.

"I don't know...they could be forcing him to say that" Karmen mumbled.

"If you're there...Will might not be dead. And we think it has something to do with that girl..." Jonathan trailed up, as Karmen's eyes widened.

Karmen took the walkie talkie from Mike, who grabbed her arm.

"Are you sure?" Mike asked.

"I trust Jonathan...I think" Karmen stated.

"We copy. It's Karmen. I'm with the kids. We're all here" Karmen spoke into the receiver, hoping she made the right call.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! We'll be seeing more of Karmen/Steve soon. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Aw, thank you! I'm glad you're enjoying this story:)

AmeliakaneShadow: Aw, thank you so much:)

9. Feelings Gone?

Meanwhile, Steve was washing away the graffiti on the cinema, feeling bad about the whole situation. He had wanted to hurt Nancy...for about five seconds, then he realised how cruel it was to write it up there for everyone to see. He had screwed up as usual, he sighed to himself. And Karmen...she had seemed so scared when the police turned up, he wondered if she had been in trouble with the law before. He hoped they hadn't caught her, or he'd have even more to feel guilty about.

Karmen dropped her head into her hands as the kids continued to argue between themselves. Her head shot up when she heard a sound from outside and looked out of the window.

"Shit! They're here!" Karmen warned them, as a car pulled up into the junkyard.

"I knew it, I knew it" Dustin cried.

"Sh! Everyone get down" Karmen whispered, as they all went to hide underneath the seats.

Karmen crawled to the front of the bus, picking up a crowbar that was lying on the floor and gripped it in her hand. Suddenly a man pulled the door open, as Karmen sprang up about to strike him. However, someone hit them before she could, and soon numerous grunts and groans could be heard from outside. Karmen looked down at the kids, as they all frowned at her, confused at what was going on.

"All right, let's go" Hopper announced, as he entered the bus.

"Let's go!" He insisted, as they all hurried after him.

Just as Eleven was stepping off the bus, the man from before grabbed her ankle as she screamed. Karmen quickly raised out her hand and shot his arm with a wave of blue electricity, as he pulled back in agony, smoke wafting from the wound.

"...What the hell was that?" Hopper inquired.

"It's a long story" Karmen replied.

"It's a long journey" Hopper retorted, as they all jumped in his car.

When they got to the Byer's home it was dark, as Karmen saw the light that had exploded the last time she was there still hadn't been fixed. Joyce was the first person out of the door, as Hopper hadn't even parked yet.

"Mike! Oh my god, Mike!" Nancy exclaimed, as she pulled her brother into a hug the moment he got out of the car.

"I was so worried about you" Nancy confessed.

"Um...yeah. Me too" Mike replied.

Karmen noticed Jonathan standing awkwardly on the steps of his house, as they shared a look. Karmen couldn't help but wonder what was going on between him and Nancy.

"Thanks for looking after them, Karmen" Nancy smiled at her, as she nodded in return.

"Is that my dress?" Nancy frowned, when she spotted what Eleven was wearing.

"Wait...I'm confused why are you with them?" Joyce inquired.

"Well I was kidnapped when I was six years old, taken to Hawkins lab and experimented on where I developed crazy ass powers and met Eleven. I then escaped a while back and only came back because I heard Eleven was still there and in trouble. Then I got messed up in all this Upside Down stuff and somehow managed to practically bump into this guys in the forest...so yeah, I guess that's the summary of it. My life's been kind of crazy" Karmen explained.

"Oh...okay" Joyce said, even though she hadn't really understand a word of Karmen had just said.

They soon realised that Eleven was too weak to be able to communicate with Will, but she told them that she could if she was 'in the bath'. Dustin phoned their teacher to ask about a sensory deprivation tank, while Karmen and Jonathan decided it was time to talk.

"So...you have powers..." Jonathan trailed off, not really sure what to say.

"And you like Nancy" Karmen replied.

"No. It's not-" Jonathan started, but she cut him off.

"Yes, you do. And I can see why. Nancy's great. She's basically my only friend...which is why this sucks" Karmen sighed.

"What do you mean?" Jonathan frowned.

"Wow, you're really oblivious" Karmen stated, raising an eyebrow.

"You mean...you like me?" Jonathan questioned, awkwardly.

"Liked. Past tense" Karmen clarified.

"Can't we still be friends?" Jonathan asked.

"I hope so but...I don't want to be a third wheel" Karmen told him.

"Nancy and I is not going to happen" Jonathan shook his head.

"She likes you, Jonathan. Trust me" Karmen smirked.

"Come on! We're going to the school" Nancy announced, as Jonathan blushed, hoping she hadn't heard any of their conversation.

She watched Jonathan walking away, sadly. She still liked him, but she wanted him to be happy, and she knew that Nancy would be better for him. No one needed to get caught up in her crazy life, she thought to herself.

"I can't believe you grew up in the same place as her. What did they

do to you in there?" Nancy asked, as she, Karmen and Mike looked for hoses for their sensory deprivation tank.

"Experimented on us. Isolated us from pretty much everything. I was older than usual when they took me, I remembered what it was like on the outside world. That's why I was so desperate to get out" Karmen explained.

"And you did" Nancy smiled at her.

"I left everyone behind. I left El. Some of those kids...they're gone now" Karmen confessed.

"Their dead?" Nancy questioned, her eyes widening.

"Sometimes it was the bad people who caught up with them...and sometimes...they just couldn't cope with what happened to them in there" Karmen explained.

"Anyone would have done the same thing in your shoes. You shouldn't feel guilty" Nancy tried to reassure her.

"People are dead. People I could have saved. I'll never get over that" Karmen confessed, as she walked away, one hose in her arms.

"Do you think she's going to be all right?" Mike inquired.

"God...I forgot you were there. You shouldn't have listened to that" Nancy sighed.

"I'm not a kid, Nancy" Mike insisted.

"Your twelve" She retorted.

"I've seen a lot more than most twelve-year olds" Mike replied, as he picked up his hose and walked away too, leaving Nancy to her thoughts.

"Hey, wait up!" Mike called after Karmen.

Karmen turned to see Mike struggling with what he was carrying and shook her head fondly.

"Here, give it to me" Karmen laughed, as she grabbed the hose.

"I could handle it" Mike rolled his eyes.

"Are we still talking about this?" Karmen asked, gesturing to the hose.

"Nancy just thinks I'm a stupid little kid" Mike grumbled, kicking a rock nearby them.

"Well you are a little kid...maybe not stupid though. Depends how you treat Eleven" Karmen informed him.

"She's my friend. I'd never do anything to hurt her" Mike frowned.

"Yep, you have a lot to learn, Mike" Karmen laughed, sadly.

Author's Notes: I hope you all liked this chapter! So we're going to be veering away from Jonathan/Karmen now and going towards Steve/Karmen, as I think it's pretty clear that Jonathan and Karmen isn't going to work. Please leave a review:)

AmeliakaneShadow: Thanks for the review:)

tazsgirl6969: Here's the new chapter, I hope you like it!

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Aw, thank you! I'm glad you like Karmen, I think I'm definitely going to have Steve/Karmen as the main couple in this story, because I can see them having more potential.

Ghouly-Girl: We'll slowly be finding out more about her powers, as she's going to get a lot stronger. And we'll see how her relationship with Eleven develops now they're both out. Thank you:)

10. Let's Finish This Thing

All too soon it was time for Eleven to go into the small kid's pool, as Karmen watched on, anxiously. She was worried that they were pushing her too far...but Will and Barb's lives were at stake.

"If it get's too much, just say. We won't be mad" Karmen informed Eleven, as she helped her into the pool.

"Okay" Eleven nodded, as she looked upright and began to float.

Almost immediately all the lights in the gym turned off, as everything became dark around them. Nothing happened for a few minutes, as they all waited with baited breath for Eleven to find something. However, Karmen noticed her breathing started to become heavy, as the lights above them flickered.

"What's going on?" Nancy queried.

"I don't know" Mike admitted.

"Is Barb okay? Is she okay?" Nancy called out to her.

"Don't Nancy, you might-" Karmen started, but she was cut off by Eleven's cry.

"Gone...gone. Gone" Eleven kept repeating, as Nancy gasped.

Karmen felt tears well up in her eyes as she realised what that meant. Barb was gone. She had been so kind to her, a real friend. And she was gone.

"It's okay, it's okay!" Joyce exclaimed, as she placed her hand on Eleven's shoulders.

Karmen bit back her tears and gripped onto Eleven's hand, knowing she needed to be strong.

"Eleven. Listen to me. You're okay. Just stay calm. You need to breathe" Karmen tried to soothe her, as Eleven held tightly onto her hand.

"We're all here with you. You're not alone" Karmen insisted, as Eleven's grip started to lessen.

"...Castle Byers" Eleven murmured, as Karmen shared a look with Jonathan.

"Will?" Eleven asked, a moment later.

"Tell him I'm coming. Mum is coming" Joyce cried, overjoyed.

Karmen felt herself let out a shaky breath, glad that he was alive. She couldn't bear anyone else dying.

"Your mum...she's coming for you" Eleven exclaimed.

"Hurry" They heard a faint response through the radio.

"Listen. You tell him to stay where he is. We're coming. We're coming, honey" Joyce stuttered.

"Just hold on a little longer. Will...Will!" Eleven frowned.

"Will? Will!" She screamed.

"Eleven, come back to us. Come back!" Karmen ordered, as Eleven suddenly shot upright.

"Hey, it's okay. I've got you. You're okay now" Karmen said, as she hugged Eleven to her, who was still holding onto her arm.

Hopper and Joyce decided to go back to the government building and try to get Will out that way. Karmen walked out of the gym, feeling that Eleven was safe enough to leave with the boys and saw Nancy and Jonathan talking on the floor. She felt her heart sink for a moment, but quickly shook her head. It wasn't important.

"I want to finish what we started. I want to kill it" She heard Nancy announce.

"I'm coming to" Karmen informed them, as she walked over.

"It's dangerous" Jonathan told her.

"Which is why I'm coming" She retorted.

"What about the kids?" Nancy inquired, as she bit her lip.

"Hold that thought" Karmen exclaimed, as she walked back into the gym.

"Guys, I need you all to stay here. We're going back to the Byers place to stop that thing" Karmen told them.

"We'll come too" Mike replied, standing up.

"Hell no. You're all going to stay here and keep safe until this is all over" Karmen ordered.

"But we want to help" Dustin stated.

"You'll be more of a distraction if you come, that's the truth of it" Karmen explained, as the boys sighed.

"Will you come back?" Eleven asked.

"Of course. I'm not leaving you again" Karmen insisted, as she knelt in front of Eleven.

"But what if it gets you? Like Barb" Eleven retorted.

"If we don't do this it's going to kill Will. And probably Joyce and Hopper" Karmen went on.

"You're leaving us pretty defenceless here" Lucas interjected.

"No one knows you here. As long as you keep quiet, and stay smart, you'll be okay" Karmen said to them all.

"Promise you'll come back" Eleven mumbled.

"I promise" Karmen smiled at her, before pulling her into a hug.

"You act like you're her mum" Nancy suggested, as they finished setting up the trap.

"She doesn't remember her mum...so I guess I took on the role"
Karmen shrugged.

"Do you remember your mum?" Nancy inquired.

"Yeah" Karmen nodded, sadly.

"Hey, I'm all finished" Jonathan stated, holding up the bats he had bashed some nails into.

"This is a terrible plan" Karmen sighed.

"You can leave if you want to" Jonathan told her.

"No. I want to kill this thing. Bad" Karmen replied.

"Remember-" Jonathan started.

"Straight into Will's room. And-" Nancy went on.

"Don't step on the trap" Jonathan cut her off.

"Wait for the yo-yo to move. Then..." Nancy trailed off, as Jonathan held up his lighter.

"Wow, you guys are even finishing each other's sentences" Karmen mumbled, as Nancy blushed.

"...Okay. You ready?" Jonathan asked them both, holding the knife out.

"Ready" Nancy nodded.

"Yeah" Karmen agreed.

"On the count of three. One. Two...You don't have to do this"
Jonathan announced when he saw the look on Nancy's face.

"Jonathan stop talking" Nancy shook her head.

"I'm just saying you don't have to-" Jonathan was cut off.

"Three!" Karmen exclaimed, as they all cut into their hands.

Karmen watched from the kitchen as Nancy finished bandaging Jonathan's wound, as they spoke in soft voices. She noticed the way Nancy's hand lingered on Jonathan's hand, and how he looked at her. Karmen let out a sigh, wondering how she hadn't seen it coming. She jumped when there was a loud knocking at the door.

"Jonathan?" They heard a familiar voice shout.

Karmen frowned as she walked towards the door, confused as to why Steve had suddenly shown up.

"Are you there, man? It's...It's Steve! Listen, I just want to talk" Steve called out, as he continued banging.

"Steve, listen to me" Karmen announced, as she opened the door before Jonathan or Nancy could.

"Hey...Karmen. What are you doing here?" Steve questioned.

"Jesus, Steve. Your face..." Karmen trailed off, as she looked at the numerous bruises and cuts on the left side of his face.

"You should see the other guy" Steve joked.

"You need to leave" Karmen informed him.

"No, I'm not trying to start anything. I swear. I just want to talk" Steve insisted.

"This is not a good time. Just go, okay?" Karmen asked.

"No, no. Listen, I messed up, okay? I messed...I messed up" Steve sighed, as Karmen saw the clear guilt on his face.

"Please...I just want to make things right. Please..." Steve trailed off, when he noticed her hand.

She had forgotten that she hadn't bandaged it up yet and that meant it was still bleeding.

"Hey, what happened to your hand? Is that blood?" Steve questioned, in a soft tone.

He grasped her hand in his and he turned it over to see the cut that was there, as she saw his eyes darken.

"It's nothing. It was an accident" Karmen shook her head, as she pulled her hand away.

"What's going on?" Steve frowned at her odd behaviour.

"Nothing" Karmen replied.

"Wait a second. Did he do this to you?" Steve questioned.

"No. Steve, just go" Karmen stated, as Steve started to try to push past her.

"Karmen, let me in" He exclaimed, as he pushed past her and made his way into the room.

"What did you do..." Steve trailed off, as he saw the state of the room.

"What is all this? What's going on?" Steve cried, as he saw the bat on the table.

"You need to get out of here" Jonathan warned him, as he grabbed him by the collar.

"What...what is that smell? Is that gasoline?" Steve accused.

"I'm not asking you, just get out of here!" Jonathan told him.

"Steve, get out!" Nancy shouted, holding the gun up, as Jonathan backed away.

"Wait, what? What is going on?!" Steve yelled, in shock.

"You have five seconds to get out of here" Nancy informed him.

"Okay, is this a joke? Put the gun down!" Steve pleaded.

"I'm doing this for you" She replied.

"Nancy, you could shoot him, for God's sake! Put the bloody gun down!" Karmen cried, as her accent slipped for the first time and they

all turned to stare at her.

"...Your English?" Steve frowned at Karmen, as Nancy lowered the gun in surprise.

"That's what you think is the craziest thing about all this?" Karmen retorted.

"Guys!...It's here!" Jonathan announced, as they noticed the fairy lights flickering.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! We'll slowly see a friendship develop with Karmen and Steve, as Jonathan falls head over heels for Nancy. Please leave a review:)

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Aw, I'm glad you like the sound of their relationship! Thank you so much for this review:)

zaneri0t: Sorry about that, but I do ship Nancy/Jonathan quite a bit, and I think a relationship with Steve would make more sense. But don't worry, there's still going to be hints of a romance in this story! I'm glad you're still reading, and thank you for the review:)

tazsgirl6969: Thanks for the review!

Micky-Moo: Aw, thank you! Here's the new chapter.

11. Monster Showdown

"Wait, what's here?" Steve asked, as Jonathan went to pick up his bat.

"Where is it?" Nancy questioned, as Karmen picked up a kitchen knife from the table.

"Woah, be careful with that!" Steve exclaimed.

"Where is it?!" Nancy insisted, as she and Jonathan looked around, back to back.

"I don't know" He answered.

"Hello?! Will someone explain to me what the hell is going-" Steve was cut off as the ceiling suddenly caved in.

Nancy shot at the ceiling as the creature they had been waiting for appeared. It opened its razor sharp jaws and screeched at them, as Karmen felt her heartbeat quicken.

"You're firing too early!" Karmen told her.

"Go! Run!" Jonathan shouted, as he grabbed Nancy by her waist.

They ran past Karmen and Steve, the latter who was staring at the creature in disbelief.

"Come on!" Karmen cried, as she grabbed his hand and pulled him behind her.

"Jump!" Jonathan called after them, as they leaped over the trap.

"Oh my God, oh my God!" Steve yelled, as Karmen pulled him into the bedroom.

Jonathan slammed the door behind them so hard, his sign fell off the pin on the other side.

"Jesus! What the hell was that?!" Steve screamed, as Nancy and Jonathan turned around.

"Shut up!" They said at the same time.

Steve was quiet immediately, as Nancy held up the gun, while Jonathan raised both the lighter and the bat. Karmen tried to quell the panic that was rising in her, as she gripped the knife in her hand. It was then that she realised she was still holding Steve's hand. She quickly let go, as she heard Steve let out an awkward cough.

"What's it doing?" Nancy queried, as the monster had still not appeared.

"I don't know" Jonathan replied, as no one moved.

A moment later the lights began to flicker, before going back to normal suddenly.

"I think it's gone" Karmen suggested.

"Do you hear anything?" Nancy inquired, as Jonathan put his head to the door.

"No" He shook his head, opening it.

They all cautiously exited the room, seeing that the creature was gone and nowhere to be seen. As they went into the living room, Steve began to mutter.

"This is crazy. This is crazy. This is crazy!" He exclaimed, as he went to pick up the phone.

"What are you doing? Are you insane?" Steve questioned, as Nancy grabbed the phone from him.

"It's going to come back!" Nancy told him.

"You need to leave, okay? Right now. It's not safe here" Karmen insisted, as she began ushering him to the door.

"But..." Steve trailed off, as she opened the door.

"Too many people have already been hurt by this thing, Steve. I don't want anyone else getting hurt who doesn't need to" She explained, as

she closed the door behind him.

Steve quickly rushed over to his car, dropping his keys as he desperately tried to open it. Once he did, he noticed the lights inside the house had begun flickering again and knew what that meant.

"Where is it?" Nancy panicked, as the fairy lights around them flickered.

"Come on. Come on, you son of a bitch" Jonathan exclaimed.

"Do you see it?" Karmen asked, as they all went back to back to each other.

"No" Nancy mumbled.

"Where are you? Come on!" Jonathan yelled, angrily.

Karmen took a deep breath, as she stilled herself to not be so scared as last time. She needed to help. The lights went off, as they all gasped, not being able to see much.

"Jonathan! Nancy cried, when she saw the monster now standing behind him.

It threw Jonathan across the room, who dropped his bat in the process. It then jumped on top of him, opening it's mouth wide as it dribbled on his face.

"Go to hell you son of a bitch!" Nancy screamed, as she shot it numerous times.

This seemed to only anger it as it stood up and began to approach a terrified Nancy, who continued to fire at it until she had no bullets left. Karmen began to create an orb in her hand as the creature got closer and closer to her friend.

"Hey!" Karmen shouted, as the creature turned around.

She threw it at the monster, almost missing it, only managing to hit its shoulder. She gulped as she saw there was now a gaping hole there, as it screamed at her angrily. It started to run for her, when it

was intercepted by Steve shoving the bat into its chest.

"Steve!" Karmen gasped, as he continued hitting it closer to the trap.

He spun the bat around his hand, making Karmen's eyes widen, causing the creature to step back into the bear trap.

"It's in the trap!" Steve announced, as Karmen came to stand beside him.

"He's stuck!" Karmen called over to Jonathan, who was standing up.

"Jonathan, now" Nancy insisted, as the boy threw his lighter at the creature.

Instantly it went up in flames, as the monster squealed and squirmed. It continued to burn as Jonathan saw the ceiling was beginning to catch fire.

"Get back" Jonathan stated, as he picked up a fire extinguisher.

Steve placed an arm protectively in front of Karmen, as the flames started to die down and smoke surrounded them. They approached the trap carefully, all of them coughing, seeing that there was no sign of a body.

"Where did it go?" Nancy asked.

"No. It has to be dead. It has to be" Jonathan exclaimed.

Karmen was bandaging her hand, as after all they had been through in the last hour, it had started bleeding more profusely. She was finding it hard holding the bandage, while trying to stick it down, when Steve came to sit next to her.

"Here, let me help" He mumbled, as he held the bandage down.

"Thanks" She smiled at him, finishing.

"I saw what you did, throwing that...thing at the creature. What are you?" Steve couldn't help but ask.

"I'm human, with a little bit added I guess" She shrugged.

She then went on to give Steve a quick recap of who she was, and how that connected to the monster that had just attacked them.

"So...is there anything else you want to spring on me? Maybe bald green aliens like in the movies?" Steve went on, as Karmen laughed.

"Now that would be crazy..." She mocked, as she realised government conspiracies weren't as crazy as that.

However, this reminded her of the person at the centre of the government conspiracy. The girl she had sworn to protect.

"Oh no...Eleven" Karmen gasped.

"What?" Nancy frowned, when she heard this.

"We left the kids defenceless at the school...it could be coming for her" Karmen explained.

"We could lure that thing back here?" Jonathan suggested.

"No, it will never come back here now it knows we can hurt it" Karmen shook her head.

"Then we should go to the school" Steve stated.

"You don't even know Eleven" Karmen said, raising an eyebrow.

"She's just a little kid, who from you just said needs our help" Steve responded.

"There's no plan if we go there...it will have the chance to surprise us" Jonathan frowned.

"My brother's there" Nancy insisted, already getting her coat on.

"Okay, let's go" Karmen mumbled, as they all walked towards the door.

"C'mon, we should take my car" Steve told them.

"Steve, why are you doing this?" Karmen asked.

"Because I'm included in this. It's like you said I don't want to see anyone get hurt...especially not Nancy...or you" Steve admitted, surprising her, as he walked over to his car.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! We can start to see the friendship forming between Steve and Karmen, as they both start to see a completely new side to each other. Please leave a review:)

Lisa: Thanks for the review:)

Micky-Moo: Steve and Karmen are slowly going to get closer, as I think they both understand each other a lot better than anyone else does. It is very hard to choose between Jonathan and Steve, isn't it? Haha:)

tazsgirl6969: Thanks! Here's the new chapter:)

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Aw, thank you so much! I think El and Karmen's relationship is really cute and look forward to exploring it more in the future. Yeah, Karmen definitely will blame herself if she can't save Eleven.

12. Who Lives and Who Dies?

"Okay, let's split up" Nancy announced once they arrived at the school.

"What? That's a terrible idea" Steve stated.

"Let's just hurry up and find them" Karmen insisted, as she ran off towards the kitchens, as Nancy and Jonathan ran to the gym.

"Woah, wait!" Steve exclaimed, as he reached out and pulled Karmen back behind a wall.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Karmen questioned, as he held her back.

She then realised just how close they were, as she felt his breath tickling her forehead, and his hand against her wrist.

"Look...soldiers" Steve gestured to the vans outside the school.

"They're already here" Karmen realised.

"Come on, we can go in the back way" Steve suggested.

Once they got to the door they found it was unsurprisingly locked, as Steve began trying to break the lock.

"I've got this" Karmen smirked, as she moved Steve out of the way.

She raised her palm and within a second, a small orb had formed which she sent flying towards the lock, which instantly exploded, pushing the door open.

"Woah..." Steve trailed off, as he followed her into the building.

"You go that way, I'll go this way...we meet back in the middle" Karmen told him, as he nodded.

She hadn't gotten far when she spotted dead bodies on the floor, but she could tell it wasn't the monster that had killed them. They had blood pouring out from all over their faces.

"Eleven" Karmen gasped, when she saw the small girl in the grip of Dr. Brenner.

"Let her go!" Karmen exclaimed, picking up a gun from a nearby soldier.

The remaining soldiers all turned around and aimed at her, as Dr. Brenner merely spared her a glance.

"You're not going to shoot me, Six. You're not a killer" Dr. Brenner reasoned.

"Do you really want to bet your life on that?" Karmen asked, as she turned off the safety on her gun.

She spotted Mike, Dustin and Lucas were all being restrained by soldiers behind Dr. Brenner, as they gave her worried looks. She lowered her gun to level Dr. Brenner's head, and looked him dead in the eye. He could tell she wasn't bluffing. Gritting his teeth, the old man let Eleven go, who instantly rushed into Karmen's arms.

"And them too" Karmen insisted, gesturing to the boys.

With a nod of his head, the three boys were let go, quickly rushing over to the pair. Suddenly all the lights around them started flickering wildly, as everyone looked around them.

"Blood" Mike mumbled.

"What?" Lucas queried.

"Blood!" Mike insisted.

"Oh shit" Karmen gasped, as she turned around.

The wall behind them began to crumble, as the familiar shriek of the monster could be heard. Karmen started to back up, as the clawed hand of the creature reached through the wall.

"Demogorgon" Dustin gulped.

The soldiers instantly went on the defensive, shooting at the monster,

but Karmen knew it would do no good.

"Come on!" Karmen cried, as she lifted Eleven into her arms to carry her, slinging the gun around her shoulder.

"Run! Run!" The boys screamed, as they ran away.

Karmen looked back to see the monster had jumped onto Dr. Brenner, happy that the old man was finally getting his comeuppance. She didn't stay to watch the rest. They quickly ran into a classroom, hoping they would be safe from the creature there, but Karmen expected otherwise.

"Let's get her onto the table" Karmen advised, as Dustin and Lucas helped her, supporting Eleven's head.

"Just hold on a little longer, okay? He's gone. The bad man's gone. We'll be home soon, and my mum...she'll get you your own bed. You can eat as many Eggos as you want. And...we can go to the Snow Ball" Mike told Eleven, taking her hands in his.

"Promise?" Eleven sniffled.

"Promise" Mike exclaimed, stroking her hands.

Karmen had to restrain herself from 'awing' at the adorable pair in front of her. She hadn't realised just how much Mike seemed to care about Eleven. Before anyone could say anything else, there was a loud roar from outside the door.

"Stay back" Karmen warned them, as she pushed the kids behind her.

They heard gunfire for a few more seconds, when suddenly it came to a stop. Karmen felt her hands tremble, as she listened out for any noise.

"Is...Is it dead?" Dustin asked.

"Why did you say that?!" Karmen sighed, knowing Dustin had just jinxed them.

"Sorry" Dustin said, with a small shrug,

Karmen jumped out of her skin when the door was ripped off its hinges and the creature dropped through, only a few seconds later.

"Use the gun! Use the gun!" Mike screeched, as Karmen bit her lip.

"I actually have no idea how to use one of these things...What? I grew up in England" Karmen replied, when they all gave her a look.

"Get the wrist rocket out, now!" Dustin shouted, as they started searching through his jacket.

"Go, go, go!" Mike screeched.

As the boys pelted the creature with rocks, Karmen saw the creature was not fazed by this at all. She took a step forward and pushed the flailing boys behind her.

"You guys need to run, now. I'll distract it" Karmen told them.

"What?! No way" Mike insisted.

"Go, now! Don't look back, just run" Karmen exclaimed, as she began pushing the boys to the side.

"We can't leave you here!" Dustin frowned.

"I'll be fine. Honestly. Just go" Karmen nodded, at the sadly.

She began to approach the creature as the boys started to flee from the classroom. She raised her hand as an orb that she had been creating for the last minute began to glow. With a scream, she threw it with all her might at the creature. It was blasted backwards, as she fell to her knees, exhausted from using that sort of power. As she looked up she was horrified to see that the monster had a gaping hole in its chest...but it was still coming for her. She began crawling away as it loomed over her, drooling all over her legs. Karmen felt her heart stop for a moment, when it opened its face to show its razor sharp teeth. Suddenly its large clawed hand hit her in the head, as everything faded to black.

Karmen shot upright as she woke up, her heart pounding as she

remembered the last thing she saw. She found out she was still in the same classroom and frowned as she saw the boys around her. She opened her mouth to speak, but it turned into a gasp as she saw Eleven walking towards the creature, that she had pinned up against the wall.

"Goodbye, Mike" Eleven whispered, as she turned around the face them.

"El, stop!" Karmen shouted, as she stood up, but Eleven used her powers to stop her.

"Thank you...for always being my friend" Eleven smiled at her, as she turned to face the monster.

"Please don't do this! El!" Karmen insisted, as she struggled against the invisible force holding her in place.

Eleven let out an ear-splitting cry as she raised her hand towards the monster, and it began to disintegrate in front of her. Soon the dust of the creature surrounded her, as Karmen was suddenly let go by the invisible force. She dropped to her knees when she saw Eleven was nowhere to be seen.

"No, no, no..." Karmen cried, as she put her hand to her mouth.

Later that night, Will had been found by Hopper and Joyce, much to everyone's relief. He was quickly taken to the hospital, where everyone, and their parents came to see if the young boy would be all right. Jonathan came in a couple of hours later to tell them he had woken up, as the boys rushed into see their friend. Karmen followed them, laughing at their ecstatic faces as they began to bombard Will with information. She noticed Jonathan smiling fondly at the scene next to her, and felt her heart flip over momentarily, before shaking her head. That was something she needed to get over. Quickly. She started to leave the room when she heard someone call out her name. Karmen was shocked when she saw it was Will.

"You know who I am?" Karmen frowned.

"Yeah, I saw you, only for a few seconds when I was in...that place. I heard you when you were looking for me. Thanks" He smiled at her, as she nodded.

"I'm glad you're okay" She grinned at him, before leaving the room.

She let out a deep breath as she exited the hospital, finding the cool night air refreshing against her skin.

"Hey" A voice mumbled from beside her, as she turned to see none other than Steve Harrington.

"Hey...what are you still doing here?" Karmen inquired.

"I was going to wait for Nancy but...she's staying with Jonathan" Steve shrugged.

"Oh..." Karmen trailed off.

"Do you want a lift home?" Steve questioned.

"Yeah...Thanks" She smiled at him, as they began to walk in unison.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! And so the friendship between Steve and Karmen will begin to grow, and hopefully be sickeningly adorable. Steve is still going to be trying to get over Nancy for a while, and so is Karmen over Jonathan. Please leave a review:)

Lisa: I thought about that for a bit, but I think it will work better with Karmen thinking Eleven's gone, for now at least. Thanks for the review!

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Steve being protective is always cute, and yeah I think his motherly instincts probably were kicking in, haha. I'm really glad you think I'm adding Karmen into the story well, as that's always really difficult. Thank you so much for the review:)

tazsgirl6969: Here's the new chapter, I hope you like it:)

Micky-Moo: Thanks for having faith, haha. I'm really looking forward

to adding Billy and Max into this story. I think Karmen will interact with Billy more as their similar ages, but the siblings are going to change things up a little. Karmen's going to hit it off really well with Max. With Billy...not so much, haha. Thank you for the review:)

13. Parties Suck

The next few weeks went by in a blur, as they all returned to school, apart from Will, as the school couldn't quite get around re-enrolling a child who used to be dead. Lucas and Dustin were over the moon to finally have their friend back, but Karmen could tell Mike was still upset. He was missing Eleven...and so was she. Karmen didn't even know whether Eleven was dead, and if she wasn't then, where was she? All she knew was that she had let her friend down.

"Hey, you going to eat that?" Steve questioned, as he sat down in the canteen next to her.

Steve had been following her around for the last few days, much to her surprise. He seemed to have completely dropped his 'popular' friends. As for Nancy, she hadn't been spotted around school much. Barb's death had hit her harder than it had for Karmen, as they had been friends for years, not to mention the guilt Nancy felt over it. Jonathan had vowed not to step back into school until Will was allowed back, so they hadn't seen much of him either.

"You touch my chips, and you die" Karmen warned Steve.

"They're called fries here remember...so..." Steve grinned, as he grabbed a handful from her plate.

"Right, and chips are crisps?" Karmen inquired, as Steve chuckled.

"How did we not pick up on the fact that your English, it's painfully obvious" Steve stated, as he ate his stolen food.

"It must be because your so oblivious" Karmen shrugged.

"So, are you going to that party tonight?" Steve queried, as she shook her head.

"Not really my scene" She replied.

"Oh, come on, it will be fun" Steve insisted.

"I think our definition of fun must be very different" Karmen

exclaimed.

"Please come...I don't really have any one else to go with, and I can't just show up by myself" Steve went on.

"Oh, you have to keep up your reputation, do you?" Karmen laughed.

"I think that ship has sailed. Everyone just treats me like a leper now" Steve sighed.

"That's because you've shut down everyone who's tried to talk to you. I know things didn't end well with you, Tommy and Carol but they've been your friends for years-" Karmen started, but he cut her off.

"No, I don't want to be around them anymore. They were never my friends, not really. And the stuff they said about Nancy...and you..." Steve shook his head.

"Speaking of Nancy, have you heard anything from her?" Karmen inquired.

"Nope. Have you heard anything from Jonathan?" Steve asked, as Karmen scoffed.

"It's not the same thing, Steve" Karmen retorted.

"You like him-" Steve started, but she cut him off this time.

"And you love Nancy. She'll come back to you. I'm sure of it" Karmen told him, as he gave her a small smile.

"But until she does I need to keep busy...if only there was some sort of party on..." Steve trailed off, with a grin.

"Okay, okay! Fine, I'll go with you to the stupid party. I don't know why you want me to come anyway, won't I just cramp your style?" Karmen suggested.

"Friends go to parties together" Steve shrugged.

"Is that what we are now?" Karmen inquired, raising an eyebrow.

"Do you not want to be?" Steve questioned, giving her puppy dog eyes.

"Jesus, Steve. Don't be so dramatic. Besides, I can think of a few worse people to be friends with" Karmen giggled.

"I will see you tonight then" Steve smiled grew, as he looked happier than she had seen him for a while.

She knew it must have been hard for him to suddenly lose his popular status overnight, and she didn't like seeing him miserable. And it would get my mind off Jonathan, she thought to herself.

Karmen brushed down her jeans as she waited in the cold outside her apartment building. She had left a few minutes before Steve said he would pick her up, mainly because she didn't want him coming up to her flat and seeing where she lived. She hated her tiny room, and compared to Steve's literal mansion, it was an embarrassment. Right on time she saw the boy's familiar car pull up beside her, as Steve jumped out of the car.

"Hey, you should have waited inside for me" Steve stated, as Karmen walked over to him.

"It's fine" She shook her head, with a small smile.

Once she sat down in the passenger seat she suddenly realised that it was the first time she had been alone in Steve's car, with just him. She wasn't sure why she had become so hyperaware of the fact when Steve hopped back into the car. He instantly reached to turn up the heating, seeing that Karmen was shivering.

"Thanks" She smiled, as he nodded in return.

They soon arrived at the party, after a drive in comfortable silence. Steve was about to get out the car, when Karmen stopped him.

"Are you really sure you want to turn up to this party...with me?" Karmen asked, as Steve frowned.

"Well yeah. It's like you said, no big deal" He shrugged.

"Steve, I'm not exactly going to help your status and clearly not being the 'king' of the school is upsetting you" Karmen went on.

"Maybe I was upset before and just didn't realise it. I'd rather have a friend than be 'King Steve'" He explained, using quotations marks with his fingers.

"You get that my friends consist of a twelve-year-old missing girl, a girl who's avoided me for the last few weeks and...Barb..." Karmen trailed off, as she remembered the ginger haired girl.

"That's better than my grand total of zero" Steve exclaimed, as Karmen raised an eyebrow.

"Oh, come on. There must be someone who's your friend" Karmen insisted, as he shrugged.

"Okay, enough of this self-deprecating crap. You're gonna go into that party, hold your head high, and act like you belong there...or you can turn this car around and go mope in your room" Karmen ordered, as Steve laughed.

"Jeez, alright Mum" Steve mocked, as she shoved his shoulder, playfully.

Karmen was surprised that she was enjoying the party. She and Steve did get some strange looks from people, but once it got around that they were just there as friends, the interest seemed to die down. As she downed the last drink she had gotten within the minute, she suddenly realised just how drunk she was getting. She quickly spotted Steve and went to go stand beside him, feeling less vulnerable by his side.

"Hey, how's it going?" Steve questioned, having to shout over the music.

"I think I need to go sit down for a minute" Karmen replied, as he nodded.

They began walking though the rooms, finding that every seat or sofa was taken up by a drunken teen. They eventually made it to a

bedroom on the top floor and entered, hoping that there would be space for them to at least sit. Neither of them could have expected what they would see.

"Nancy?" Steve whispered, softly.

Jonathan and Nancy were lying on the bed, with his shirt off and her hair in a mess. They broke their kiss apart as they saw the pair who had just entered.

"I...It's not..." Nancy stuttered, as she jumped off the bed.

Instantly, Steve took off not sparing her another glance as she rushed after him. Jonathan was about to follow her when Karmen grabbed his wrist.

"I think you've done enough" She stated.

"Steve, wait!" Nancy cried, as she rushed out of the house after him.

"You're unbelievable" Steve scoffed, as he picked up his pace.

"I didn't...I mean how we left it...I thought..." Nancy trailed off.

"You thought it would be alright to hop into bed with Jonathan Byers?!" Steve shouted, as he turned around to face her.

"You knew that things had...developed between me and him" Nancy went on.

"Three weeks. It's not even been three weeks since our 'sort of break up'. You couldn't have waited any longer?" Steve exclaimed.

"We were drinking, and things escalated" Nancy sighed.

"Just stay away from me, okay? I don't want to see you, I don't want to hear from you...Just stay away" Steve ordered.

Jonathan and Karmen had witnessed the end of the argument and Karmen watched as Jonathan sped over to Nancy, who was now crying. It was then that the girl spotted Karmen.

"Karmen, I...I'm sorry" Nancy cried.

"Save it, Nance" Karmen shook her head.

"You said you liked Jonathan, past tense. We thought it would be all right" Nancy stated.

"And I would be fine with you guys getting together...in the future! Not now. Why couldn't you have just waited?" Karmen questioned, as she walked away.

She found Steve leaning with his hands against his car, looking at his reflection in the shiny metal.

"Hey, are you okay?" She inquired, as he turned to look at her.

His eyes were bloodshot from where he had clearly been crying. He looked miserable.

"Well, that's the last party I'll be going to for a while" Karmen joked, as Steve rubbed his eyes.

"Yeah" He mumbled, sniffing.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Karmen suggested, as he shook his head vehemently.

He went to go get into the driver's seat of his car but Karmen stopped him before he could open the door.

"If you have drunk anywhere near as much as I have you definitely can't drive right now" Karmen told him, really thinking his emotional state was more why he shouldn't drive.

"Yeah, I guess, but how are we gonna get home?" Steve queried.

"...Have you ever slept in a car before?" Karmen asked.

"No" He frowned.

"Well there's a first time for everything. Luckily your seats look pretty comfy" Karmen exclaimed.

That was how she found herself a few blocks away lying down in the backseat of Steve Harrington's car with two blankets over her. There had been a disagreement for a while on who would take the more comfortable backseat, but Steve had won, stating that it was his car and his rules. Karmen sat upright and saw the awkward position that Steve had fallen asleep in. She grabbed one of the blankets from her legs and placed it over the sleeping boy. After that she sat back down in the seat and drifted off into a light slumber.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Jonathan and Nancy will be getting together earlier in this story so by the time of Season 2, they'll have been in an established relationship for a while. Does anyone have anything they'd like to see in Season 2? Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: She will eventually, but for now she expects that Eleven could be dead. Thanks for the review!

Llisa: Sorry, here's the new chapter! It's a long one, so enjoy:)

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Yeah, I do like to make things as painful as possible, haha. Billy and Max are going to be great additions to this story, and don't worry Karmen will definitely get to punch him at some point! Aww, thank you:)

14. Christmas Time

Karmen shivered as she felt the cold wind brush against her neck, as she pulled her coat closer to her body. It was Christmas Eve and she had just hopped off the bus and was making the journey to Steve's house. She frowned as she saw none of the decorations were on outside his house or many of the lights inside. She jogged towards the door, as she checked her watch. She was a few minutes earlier than Steve asked her to come over, but she didn't think it would matter. She knocked on the door a couple of times and waited for an answer. The moment the door opened she raised up the present she was holding and grinned.

"Merry Christmas!" She exclaimed.

Her smile instantly fell when she saw the sad look on Steve's face, and knew something was wrong.

"Hey, what's wrong?" She frowned, as he stepped aside to let her out of the cold.

"They're not coming back for tomorrow" Steve sighed, as he walked towards the main room.

"What? Why not?" She asked, knowing the 'they' he was referring to was his parents.

"They've closed the deal tonight for that big order, and there's a party there tomorrow...so they didn't want to say no and jeopardise the deal" Steve scoffed.

"...I'm sorry, Steve" Karmen sighed, as she went to sit down next to him on the couch.

Steve's parents had been there less and less the past few months, hating the rumours circulating about their son being involved in the 'conspiracy'. They had both told him on multiple occasions how disappointed they were he allowed himself to get messed up in it all...and Karmen had a feeling his dad might have done more than just say that.

"Yeah...it is what it is" Steve shrugged.

"Alright, time to open my present" Karmen insisted, shoving the gift into his lap.

"Aren't we supposed to wait until Christmas Day?" Steve chuckled.

"You need something to cheer you up now, so I'll allow it" She exclaimed, as Steve began to tear away the wrapping paper.

Karmen watched as his face grew from confused, to happy within a matter of seconds.

"How did...?" Steve questioned, as he looked through the letters and pictures in his hands.

"I got a cheap ticket to Oregon last week and well...when I told them I was a friend of their grandson they were more than happy to see me" Karmen explained.

It had meant that for the next month, cash was going to be hard to come by, but she had enough for rent and making Steve happy was the important thing. It had been nice travelling on the train all that way, and Steve's grandparents were incredibly sweet. There had been a big falling out between his dad and them a few years back, which had meant he hadn't seen them since. His dad wouldn't allow it.

"Did...ahem, did you read any of this?" Steve questioned, awkwardly.

"No, I just wrapped it up once they gave it to me. Why?" She inquired.

"No reason...I just can't believe you did this. Thank you" Steve smiled at her, genuinely.

"Well I didn't want to have to deal with you being miserable all Christmas, did I?" Karmen grinned, as she nudged him playfully.

"Alright, now you have to open my present" Steve stated.

Karmen frowned as he passed her the smallest gift she had ever seen, it was half the size of her palm. Her frown grew as she opened it up

to find a key inside.

"What's this for?" Karmen asked.

"It opens doors" Steve mocked her, as she rolled her eyes.

"Jackass. What does it open?" She queried, with a small laugh.

"C'mon. I'll show you" He exclaimed, as he grabbed his coat.

They had been driving for a quarter of an hour when Steve parked the car outside a block of apartments and raised his eyebrow at the building.

"It's an apartment facing the sun so you'll probably get blinded every morning, but at least it's got a kitchen and-" Steve was cut off as Karmen squealed in delight and pulled him into a hug.

She felt his soft hair press against her cheek, and his hands moved to the small of her back slowly. It was a slightly awkward hug as the gear stick was bruising her leg, but as Steve pulled her closer, she decided it was still one of the best hugs she had gotten for a long time.

"Oh my God" Karmen couldn't contain her laughter, as Steve came out of her small bathroom in the Christmas jumper his grandma had made for him.

"It's not that bad" Steve retorted.

"No...it's much worse" Karmen giggled, as it was Steve's turn to roll his eyes.

"So, how'd you like this place?" Steve inquired.

"It's amazing! I mean look at this kitchen, this table is huge!" Karmen exclaimed, as Steve looked around the room that he knew was smaller than his bedroom.

"At least now you're not going to be funny about inviting me in" Steve explained, raising an eyebrow.

"Ah, you noticed that" Karmen mumbled.

"Yeah, but I don't get it. Do you really think I'd judge you?" Steve inquired.

"I don't know...maybe. I guess I was just embarrassed" She confessed.

"Well we're friends so...you don't have to be" Steve shrugged.

"Are you sure that you could afford paying the rent for this place?" Karmen bit her lip.

"Trust me, I had plenty. My parents have been giving me crazy amounts, so they don't feel so bad for leaving me alone all the time" Steve informed her.

"They're assholes" Karmen scoffed.

"Aren't you supposed to give me some speech on how they're still my parents?" Steve raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah, they are. But they're also assholes. And you deserve better" Karmen told him.

"You know, I think I'm starting to grow on you" Steve smirked.

"Correction, the free lifts you give out are what's growing on me" Karmen replied, making Steve laugh.

"Do you wanna hang out tomorrow? I...I don't really want to be alone" Steve admitted.

"Neither do I. Spending Christmas alone...its kind of sucked the last couple of years" Karmen went on.

"How'd you survive being on your own when you were so young?" Steve couldn't help but ask.

"I went to care for the first few years and then...I got into the wrong crowds I guess, but they looked after me" Karmen explained.

"I don't think I'd survive a day on my own even now" Steve confessed.

"I don't know. I think you're stronger than you think, Harrington" She smiled at him.

Karmen's thoughts drifted to her murky past, and even though she and Steve were friends, she couldn't tell him about what she had done to survive. She was ashamed. She just hoped the past wouldn't come back to haunt her.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! It felt a little weird writing a Christmas chapter in summer, so it will probably feel weird for you guys reading it, haha. Could that be a bit of foreshadowing concerning Karmen's past? Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: It's going to be really interesting seeing how their relationship has grown in Season 2! Dustin asking her for advice on how to woo Max sounds adorable. Thanks for the review:)

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Definitely poor Steve:(I'm glad you're liking where I'm taking this as I thought it would be interesting to change the story up a bit. Aw, thanks for this review!

Lisa: Yeah, Steve didn't deserve all this. I hope you like this chapter!

tazsgirl6969: Thanks for the review:)

15. School Life

Karmen inwardly cringed as she read Steve's essay, finding it got worse the longer she read it. She couldn't understand it, he had been doing much better in his studies lately.

"Okay, what's going on with you?" Karmen inquired, turning to him.

"What do you mean?" Steve shrugged, from the driver's seat of his car.

"This isn't good and we both know it. Why are you trying to flunk this application?" Karmen suggested.

"What? No...no, I'm not" Steve stuttered, in response.

"Tell me the truth, asshole" Karmen insisted, swatting Steve's arm with the papers.

"Hey, watch the merchandise" Steve laughed.

"Is this about Nancy?" Karmen figured.

"No...not everything is about her" Steve dismissed.

"So, you're not trying to stick around so you have a longer time to win her back?" Karmen went on.

"...Okay, it's one of the reasons. Along with the fact that my dad has been busting my ass about working for him all summer...and well you know..." Steve trailed off.

"What?" Karmen frowned.

"Well I don't want to leave my best friend, now do I" Steve admitted, as a smile grew on Karmen's face.

"You're so adorable, it sickens me" Karmen giggled.

"And I have to stop you from pining after Jonathan now that he and Nancy have broken up" Steve stated, raising an eyebrow.

"I do no such thing" Karmen grumbled.

"I wouldn't be surprised if you were doodling his name over your textbooks" Steve mocked.

"Says mister broody" Karmen retorted.

"I don't brood...I...allure" Steve suggested, raising an eyebrow.

"Wow, someone's been studying" Karmen laughed.

"I'm serious though, okay? We're going to ignore them just like they've ignored us the past few months" Steve insisted.

"You got that goddamn right" Karmen replied, as Steve chuckled.

"You've been hanging out with Dustin too much. You're got a dirty mouth, Karmen" Steve teased her.

Karmen didn't know why but she felt herself begin to blush. It had been happening increasingly recently, and only around Steve. She was thankful when a loud car stole Steve's attention, as the colour of her cheeks died down. They both exited the car, as the loud motor parked not far from them. A guy exited the car in some of the tightest jeans Karmen had ever seen. He had a cigarette in his mouth, and unimpressed expression on his face. Karmen watched as a young ginger girl rushed out of the car and began to skate down the hill, not giving the guy a second glance. However, the boy in question had certainly noticed her. For the second time in only a minute, Karmen felt herself blush again when he winked her way.

"What the hell is his problem?" Steve grumbled, as they watched him walk past a flock of girls who were almost dribbling.

"Are you jealous that someone might steal your title of best hair in the school?" Karmen giggled.

"Hey, remember who drives you around everywhere, yeah?" Steve suggested, as Karmen held her hands up in mock surrender.

"Hey Will! Wait up" Karmen called after the small boy.

"Oh hi, Karmen" Will nodded, when he saw her approach.

"How're you doing, kiddo? Heard you're going back to the labs this afternoon?" Karmen exclaimed.

"Yeah...it's nice to hear someone say it. Not just brush over it" Will admitted.

"People are stupid" Karmen shrugged.

"Can I ask you a question?" Will inquired.

"Do you only hang around with me because you hope you'll run into my brother?" Will asked.

"No. Of course not. I don't know...I guess with everything that happened last year...I just like to check up on you kids" Karmen confessed.

"I think you and Jonathan would have been good together" Will informed her, as she smiled.

"Maybe" She shrugged.

"And he is single now..." Will trailed off, a shy smile on his face.

"Are you trying to pimp out your brother?" Karmen questioned, as he shrugged with a laugh.

As if on cue, Karmen noticed the boy she was just talking about walking towards them, and quickly said goodbye to Will and walked over to her locker. She had hoped Jonathan wouldn't follow her, but she had no such luck.

"Hey" He offered, as he walked up beside her.

"Hey" She replied stiffly, not turning to look at him.

"Are you...um, are you mad at me?" Jonathan questioned.

"No" She shrugged.

"Because you seem to be avoiding me" Jonathan stated.

"Must be your imagination" Karmen told him.

"I...I miss us being friends" Jonathan confessed, as Karmen then turned to look at him.

He gave her those big puppy dog eyes that she just couldn't resist. She could see he had managed to get a nice tan over summer. It suited him, she thought to herself. She felt herself stutter over her words for a moment before she suddenly felt hands wrap around her waist. She was sent spinning around, as she heard a familiar laugh from behind her. Unable to keep the smile off her face, she whipped around and slapped Steve on the shoulder, who only laughed harder.

"Take those stupid things off" Karmen teased, as she grabbed the sunglasses that Steve was wearing.

"Hey!" Steve exclaimed, as Karmen then went to put them on herself.

"Do I look like a douchebag?" Karmen suggested, as Steve nodded.

"Pretty much" He informed her.

She then realised that Jonathan had already walked away, clearly feeling awkward watching the interaction. She watched him saunter down the hallway, hands in his pockets and head down. She felt her heart drop for a moment.

"What did he want?" Steve inquired.

"I don't know...he said something about being friends..." Karmen trailed off.

Steve raised his hand out as he pulled the sunglasses back until they were resting on top of her head, tangled into her thick brown locks.

"So, what now that he and Nancy have broken up suddenly he wants to speak with you again? What an asshole" Steve mumbled, darkly, as he rested against the locker.

"I think he's just lonely" She shrugged, as Steve sighed.

"So?" Steve retorted, as he seized the sunglasses from her hair.

"You deserve better than him" Steve insisted, smoothing down the side of Karmen's hair that had fluffed up.

Karmen shivered lightly, as Steve ran his hand down her hair. He pushed back the locks behind her ear and patted her shoulder softly, in a way that was too friendly compared to his earlier actions. He gave her a quick smile and began to walk away, clearly oblivious to how she could take what he had just done. As Karmen watched him walk away, she shook her head in annoyance. Why were boys so confusing, she asked herself.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I've started a new fanfic which you can find here [s/12973267/1/The-Most-Important-Thing](https://www.fanfiction.net/s/12973267/1/The-Most-Important-Thing) or just go check out my profile. It's for Terminator: Sarah Connor Chronicles, so if anyone of you used to watch that or any of the Terminator series, please go check it out:) Sorry that this chapter was a little short, I'll try to update quicker next time. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Sorry, this is a short chapter too, but I think it's got some fun interactions in it!

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Yep, adorable is the exact word I would use to describe them, haha. I'm glad you're liking them so far!

16. Halloween

"Oh wow...you guys do realise it's not-" Karmen started, but Dustin quickly cut her off.

"Fancy dress? Yes, we realise that now, thank you" Dustin grumbled.

"Well at least you're dressed up as something cool" She stated, ruffling his hair.

"I'm never going to live this down" Mike groaned.

"Ah, to be thirteen and a drama queen" Karmen giggled.

"Oh ha ha. Did it go alright over at the Holland's house last night?" Mike questioned.

"What do you mean?" Karmen frowned.

"Well Nancy was going over there with Steve last night so...I thought...I mean maybe I was wrong..." Mike stuttered, seeing Karmen's frown deepen.

"You have got to be kidding me" She huffed, as she walked away to find Steve.

"Way to put your foot in it, Mike" Lucas exclaimed.

Steve smiled as he saw Karmen approached, but it quickly died on his face when he saw her expression.

"Why didn't you tell me you met up with Nancy last night?" Karmen inquired.

"It's not a big deal" Steve shrugged.

"I thought we agreed that we were going to avoid them" Karmen stated.

"I know, I know. But she phoned me yesterday, and she was so upset..." Steve trailed off.

"So you just drop everything and run off back to her?" Karmen suggested.

"It's not like that. I just wanted to be there for her...as a friend" He insisted.

"Just like Jonathan wants to be friends with me now, huh?" Karmen retorted.

"It's different..." He trailed off.

"How is it? You could have invited me, I could have acted like a buffer between you two or something" She went on.

"I didn't think it was that big of a deal" Steve told her.

"Oh really? And that's why you didn't tell me about it" Karmen scoffed, as she walked away.

Later that afternoon she had begun to feel bad about their fight. She realised that she sounded more like a jealous girlfriend and she didn't want to stay mad at Steve. She had asked around and found out he was in the library. She stopped in her tracks when she spotted Steve and Nancy in a separate room, hugging each other. She saw how Steve looked at Nancy as he pulled away and bit her lip. He was still so clearly in love with her.

Karmen was walking towards Tina's party later that evening, having assumed that either Steve was no longer going or was taking Nancy instead. She crossed her arms over her chest and shivered, it wasn't a particularly cold night, but she had been walking for some time. She frowned when she saw a familiar car beep behind her and came to a stop by her side.

"Hey, you need a ride?" Jonathan inquired.

"You're going to Tina's party? I thought you were taking Will trick or treating" She asked, confused.

"He wanted to hang out with people he's own age. So I thought I should too" Jonathan shrugged, as Karmen decided to take his offer

up.

"Who are you dressed as?" Jonathan frowned, checking Karmen out.

"Ripley. You know, from Alien" She shrugged, as Jonathan gave her a blank look.

"Well...you, um...you look really good" Jonathan told her.

"Oh...thanks. What are you dressed as?" Karmen inquired.

"Guy who hates parties" He replied, making her laugh.

"Cheapskate" She mumbled, as they both burst out laughing.

Soon enough they made it to Tina's party, and they both began to feel out of place. Parties had never been Jonathan's thing and after the last party Karmen had been to, she had her reservations.

"It's not too late to turn back" Karmen suggested.

"C'mon, we need to at least try to act like normal teenagers. At least for one night" Jonathan insisted, as Karmen sighed and gave in.

"There will be lots of free alcohol I suppose" She grinned.

They entered the house, finding the music was blaring and kids were going wild. Karmen's eyes quickly found a familiar face in the crowd, as she watched Steve dancing with Nancy, a big smile on his face. She looked away as she saw him pull Nancy in for a kiss and headed straight for the drinks table. Jonathan couldn't help but notice the lights in the room seemed to flicker as she walked past, and wondered if she subconsciously had something to do with it. She began to pour vodka into a red cup, surprising Jonathan as he looked at where her gaze had been with a pained look.

"Shouldn't I be the one needing to get drunk?" Jonathan suggested, as Karmen began to gulp down her drink.

"Well let's see...the only girl I considered family is missing, probably dead, you and Nancy have barely spoken to me in the last year, my closest friends are a bunch of 13-year olds and Steve...Steve is just an

asshole" Karmen ranted, downing the rest of her drink.

"I thought Steve was your best friend?" Jonathan frowned.

"So did I. But that was before Nancy came back into his life. Now I've been pushed to the side. Just like you did" Karmen stated.

"I...I thought you were okay with me and Nancy" Jonathan stuttered.

"Well I didn't think you'd completely freeze me out. I thought we were friends!" Karmen blurted out, feeling angry.

Before either of them could say anything, Nancy was approaching them, swaying lightly as she re-filled her drink. Steve, of course, was not far behind her, but came to a stop when he saw Karmen and Jonathan together. He let his eyes trail down Karmen's costume, which showed off the curves of her body and brought his attention straight to her chest. Karmen blushed under his intense gaze, which Jonathan seemed to notice.

"Hey...I wasn't sure you'd come..." Steve trailed off.

"What? Considering we said we'd come together and you ditched me? I found someone else to go with" Karmen said, raising an eyebrow.

She then grabbed Jonathan's hand and pulled him into the crowd of dancing teenagers, still feeling Steve's gaze against her back.

"What was that about?" Jonathan questioned, as Karmen began to dance, swaying her body to the music.

"Nothing. C'mon, dance with me" She suggested, as she slung her arms around his shoulders and began to dance to the loud music.

"Karmen, I wanted to talk to you about...how you feel...about me" Jonathan started, as Karmen could barely hear him over the music.

"Are you asking if I still like you?" Karmen asked, as he nodded.

Without a second's thought she leaned in and pressed her lips against his, pulling him closer by his shoulders. He quickly returned the kiss, as his hands found a place to rest on her lips. Suddenly she pulled

away, a frown on her face.

"What's wrong?" He queried, as Karmen looked away, an awkward look on her face.

"I guess that gives me my answer" He mumbled.

"I did really like you, Jonathan. And you still have this mystery thing about you, and the hair but...I guess my feelings have gone" She sighed.

"Maybe they've been replaced for feelings for someone else" He suggested, as he turned around to see Steve trying to stop Nancy from drinking anymore of the punch.

"I...I have no idea what you're talking about. I need a drink" She shook her head, not wanting to think about what he had just said.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Sorry it took so long to update but I've had a lot of essays to do lately. It seems like Karmen has realised she's over Jonathan, but is Steve over Nancy? Please leave a review:)

Lisa: Thank you!

uNICOrnDIANGELO: Aw, thank you so much! I'm really loving them together, but it's definitely going to take some time for them to get together. Hopefully lots of fluff between them to come:)

Micky-Moo: Aw, I'm glad you like them:) I think Steve will slowly start to realise his feelings for Karmen, but it's going to take some time!

tazsgirl6969: Aw, thank you!

17. Steve's Heartbreak

Meanwhile, Steve had managed to get punch all over Nancy, and was currently helping her to wash out the stains in the bathroom.

"I can do it...I can do it!" She insisted, pushing him away from her.

"C'mon Nance, I just want to help" He sighed.

"You always want to help" She mumbled.

"You're drunk, okay? You need to go home" Steve told her.

"I'm fine" She groaned, rolling her eyes.

"No, you're not fine. Let me take you home" Steve suggested.

"Why do you even care?" Nancy scoffed, turning to Steve.

"Why do you think?" Steve said, as he placed his hand on her cheek.

"What..." She trailed off, putting the cloth down that she was wiping her top with.

"I still care about you, Nance. Of course, I do" Steve pointed out.

"It's not enough. It was never enough" She told him.

"What?" He frowned.

"It was bullshit. It was all bullshit" She cried.

"No, no. Don't say that, what we had-" Steve started, but she cut him off.

"Was bullshit. I never..." She trailed off, her eyes becoming unfocused.

"You what?" He questioned, his hand falling from her cheek.

"I don't love you...I never loved you" She confessed, dismissively as she went back to whipping her top.

"No...you said you did...you told me you loved me!" He exclaimed.

"It was bullshit...where's Jonathan?" She sighed, almost dropping the cloth on the floor.

"I...I'll go get him" Steve mumbled, as he rushed out of the room.

He quickly spotted Jonathan in the crowd, surprised that Karmen wasn't with him and told him that Nancy needed him. Jonathan stared back at him for a few seconds, confused, but rushed off to the bathroom to find his ex-girlfriend. Steve was almost out of the door when he finally spotted Karmen...and Billy. He felt his blood turn cold as he saw Billy lean in to kiss her, which she seemed to happily respond to. However, he then saw how when she leaned into the kiss she overestimated how she was standing and almost fell over. She let out a drunken laugh, as Billy held her up by her waist, and then offered the drink in his hand to her. Blinking away any tears left in his eyes, he approached the pair, an angry expression on his face.

"She's had enough" Steve announced, as he grabbed the drink from Billy's hand.

"What's it to you, Harrington?" Billy questioned.

"She's my friend and she's drunk. So, fuck off" Steve told him.

"What did you just say to me?" Billy retorted, as he let go of Karmen and turned to fully face Steve.

"Just go away, Steve" Karmen rolled her eyes, as he was the last person she wanted to see.

"I thought you said she was your friend" Billy mocked.

"She is" Steve insisted.

"Do you even have any friends left?" Billy questioned, getting into Steve's personal space.

With a roll of her eyes, Karmen went to leave, not wanting to get involved in a fight, but Billy grabbed her arm. She turned to look at him, a scowl on her face.

"Hey, where do you think you're going?" Billy queried, his hold on her tight.

"Anywhere I want" Karmen spat back, pulling her arm from his grip.

"Fucking tease" Billy mumbled, as Karmen gave him a disbelieving look.

"What did you just say?" Karmen growled, as the light above them crackled and burst.

Steve quickly realised it was Karmen that had done this and pulled her away as everyone was distracted by the sudden darkness around them. He figured that due to her drunken state she didn't have a hold on her powers.

"Ugh, let go of me" Karmen exclaimed, as soon as they got outside, being able to see again.

"What were you thinking?! Going for someone like that?" Steve couldn't help but blurt out.

"What do you care?" Karmen scoffed, as she began to walk away.

"Where are you going?" Steve sighed.

"Home" She replied.

"It's a half hour walk, it's midnight and it's cold" Steve pointed out.

"Yeah...you should probably just go back inside" Karmen shrugged.

"What is with you today? Why are you so pissed?" Steve questioned.

"God, you're oblivious" Karmen mumbled.

"Great, so somehow I've screwed things up with you now" Steve grumbled.

"We were supposed to go together tonight. Does that ring any bells?" Karmen pointed out, crossing her arms.

"That's what this is about?" Steve frowned.

"We said...actually, we promised that we weren't going to go back to those two, but the minute they break up you're running back into Nancy's arms!" Karmen shouted, unsure why she was getting so angry.

"Well you seemed pretty cosy with Jonathan earlier" Steve retorted.

"You started it" Karmen told him.

"...Look, I don't want to fight with you. Especially not over Nancy" Steve exclaimed.

"Why not? Aren't you two back together now?" Karmen inquired.

"No...that's never going to happen" Steve sighed.

"I thought you two were destined to be together" She mocked.

"I doubt that would work seeing as she doesn't love me...and never did" Steve mumbled, kicking a rock with his feet.

"...She sucks" Karmen suggested, making Steve laugh.

"Your drunk brain is very insightful" Steve joked.

"Flattery will get you nowhere" Karmen laughed.

She soon realised that they were going in the wrong direction to her flat and realised he must have been directing her to his large house.

"Are your parents not home?" She questioned, when she saw there were no lights on.

"They haven't been back for a while..." Steve trailed off, kicking a stone.

"Oh, I get it...bringing a girl over when they're not home...I am not that kind of girl, Stevie" She informed him, pointing her finger in his face.

"Well you have kissed Jonathan and Billy tonight" Steve teased, brushing her hand away from his face.

"I didn't think you'd seen that" Karmen frowned.

"I did...I thought it would be a dream come true for you" He pointed out.

"Nope. I am officially over Jonathan Byers!" She shouted, making Steve happy that he didn't have any close neighbours.

"I'm sorry, you know...that I went with Nancy tonight and not you. I was wrong" Steve admitted, as he opened his front door.

"Well duh" Karmen mumbled, making Steve laugh.

"You need some water" He suggested, as he walked into his kitchen and poured her some from the tap.

When he came back into the front room, he sighed when he saw she had already fallen asleep on the couch.

"You are one sleepy drunk" He huffed, as she mumbled something incoherently.

He pondered leaving her to sleep on the couch for a few moments, but decided against it, thinking that she could fall off in her drunken state. He crouched down and placed one hand against her back and the other behind her knees and carefully lifted her up. Her head lolled against his shoulder, as he began to move her across the room. He kicked his bedroom door open with his foot, and then laid her down on the bed. When he tried to move away, Karmen suddenly sprang up and wrapped her arms around his shoulders.

"You're a good friend...my best friend...the best..." She mumbled, sleepily, before she seemed to get too tired to hold on and flopped back onto the bed.

Steve laughed at this, happy that even in her current state Karmen was able to help heal the heartbreak of the night. He pulled the covers over her, which she snuggled against quickly. Cautiously, he brushed some hair away from her face, as his hand lingered there for a few seconds. Shaking his head, he pulled away, and put a pillow against her back to make sure she wouldn't turn over in the night.

"Night Karmen" He said fondly, as he walked away and turned the light off in the room.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Well Karmen's announced she's officially over Jonathan...maybe leaving her open to explore new relationships? Haha. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: Here's the new chapter, enjoy!

Micky-Moo: Hopefully they can all work out their relationships, and realise what they really want. Thanks for the review:)

18. No More Relationship Drama

Karmen woke up suddenly, shooting up in the bed with a gasp. She had been having her usual nightmare about Eleven being dead and held her head in her hands.

"Karmen" She heard someone whisper.

"Hello?" She questioned, as she looked around the room.

Her eyes widened as memories of last night came flooding back... kissing Jonathan, then kissing the new guy and then Steve brought her to his house.

"Steve?" She called out, thinking he must have been the one who whispered her name.

"Karmen?" The voice came again, distantly.

This time she was sure it was a girl's voice...it almost sounded like Eleven, she thought to herself.

"Great, I'm losing my mind" Karmen groaned, as she hopped off the bed.

"Karmen!" The voice shouted, making her heart stop for a moment.

"El?" She gulped, as she realised the sound was coming from the closet.

She rushed over and pulled open the doors to find...nothing. No Eleven. And no one else either. Shaking her head, she walked out the room. Eleven was gone. She tilted her head when she walked into the kitchen and found that someone had made her breakfast and there was a note by it.

"Couldn't be late for practice. Thought I'd let you sleep in. The spare keys are on top of the letter, so if you can just lock up when you leave. See you at school" She read out loud, a small smile on her face.

Meanwhile, Steve was not having a good morning at practice, as Billy seemed to make it his goal to make his morning difficult.

"What the hell is your problem?" Steve asked, after Billy had tried to lunge for him for the tenth time.

"I'm just trying to get to know you, Harrington. See why everyone used to call you King Steve...before you turned bitch" Billy pointed out.

"Excuse me?" Steve grimaced, while trying to keep the ball out of Billy's clutches.

"You heard me. First it was Princess Wheeler, and now Little Miss Electric has you wrapped around her finger, huh?" Billy goaded.

"Little Miss Electric?" Steve frowned, raising an eyebrow.

"I have eyes and I know what I saw last night" Billy told him.

"Wow, were you dropped on your head at birth? You think Karmen has superpowers or something?" Steve laughed it off, hoping he seemed convincing.

"Laugh all you want, Harrington. She's peaked my interest" Billy informed him.

"You stay away from her" Steve warned him.

"Or what?" Billy smirked, as he tripped Steve up and took the ball from him.

Steve watched with a scowl as Billy then leaped up and shot the basketball into the hoop, making it look easy.

The game ended soon enough, as Billy had thrashed the whole team. Steve didn't think he's morning could get any worse after his heated conversation with Nancy in the middle of the game.

"Hey!" He heard someone call behind him as he was walking towards the showers.

"Hey, finally made it, huh?" Steve smiled when he saw Karmen walking towards him.

"Yeah, maybe not in one piece..." Karmen trailed off, as her eyes quickly looked over Steve's body.

She was amazed how any one could look good after playing a sweaty game of basketball, but Steve was proving her wrong. His hair looked better than ever, there was sweat glistening down his neck...she cut herself off mid thought as she realised she had been staring at him.

Steve's attention was caught by the giggles and catcalls behind him, as Billy walked into the locker room, a trial of girls not far behind him. Steve saw Billy looking over at the pair with a smirk but was surprised when he saw that Karmen's eyes were still squarely on him.

"I wanted to return these" She stated, pulling the keys out of her bag.

"No, it's fine. You can keep them" Steve shrugged.

"Seriously?" She frowned, as he nodded.

"Nancy came by earlier...I think it's officially over between us. For good this time" Steve admitted.

"Wow, really?" She said, surprised.

"I can't deal with her stringing me along anymore" He shrugged.

"Well I'm sure the right girl is out there somewhere for you" She told him.

"I doubt that. No, I've just got to stick my head down and finish school. No more relationship drama" Steve insisted.

"Right..." Karmen trailed off.

Karmen had been waiting outside the showers for a while now, after Steve had promised to drive her home from school. She wasn't surprised he was taking so long, as she knew that Steve probably took about the same time it took her or any other girl to get ready.

"Aw, sweetheart, I didn't realise you were waiting for me" Billy smirked, as he approached her.

"In your dreams" She huffed.

"Well you were last night" He mumbled, leaning into her.

"Ugh" She grumbled, as she pushed him away.

"What? You suddenly don't want me anymore?" He questioned, raising an eyebrow at her.

"I don't have time for assholes like you" She retorted.

"Oh please. Every girl likes a bad boy" Billy grinned.

"I don't see any around though. Just a lonely little boy" Karmen shrugged, a small smirk on her face when she saw she was getting a rise out of him.

"You and Harrington...you're like two peas in a pod, aren't you?" Billy suggested, making Karmen frown.

"I see the way you look at him...it's just a shame he clearly doesn't feel the same way about you. Like at all" Billy told her, as she gritted her teeth.

With a triumph smirk at getting the last laugh, Billy backed off, walking out of the gym.

"He's a dick" A voice came from up in the seats of the gym.

Karmen rounded the corner to see a young ginger girl had been watching the whole scene.

"Hey...aren't you like his sister or something?" Karmen frowned.

"Or something. His dads with my mum" She explained.

"Wow...that's rough" Karmen stated, as the girl got up from her seat.

"I was supposed to get a ride home with him, but I wanted to help my...friends out with finding their pet" The girl informed her.

"What does it look like?" Karmen questioned.

"Uh...kind of a lizard" The ginger shrugged.

"Who would bring a lizard to school?" Karmen frowned.

"Dustin" She answered, as Karmen laughed.

"Ah, I should have known. So, you've been accepted into their party then?" Karmen asked.

"Maybe...Mike doesn't seem to like me" She went on.

"The last girl he was friends with...well it didn't end well..." Karmen trailed off.

"He hates me" She insisted.

"Of course, he doesn't. I could talk to them all if you wanted" Karmen suggested.

"You think they'll listen to you?" She asked.

"It's worth a shot" Karmen shrugged.

"Are you sure? I mean you don't even know me" She pointed out.

"Alright, I'm Karmen. What's your name?" She queried, holding her hand out.

"Max" The girl grinned, as she shook her hand.

"I think you and I are going to get on just fine, Max" Karmen told her.

Karmen frowned when she heard the doors to the gym suddenly slam shut, and turned to see who was there, realising someone must have been watching them. But there was no one there. She was going to walk over and see if she could catch up with whoever it had been, but Steve arrived, and she forgot all about it.

"Woah...hey, what's going on?" Karmen asked, as she saw Lucas rush past them.

"It's Will! He's having another episode. It's bad!" Lucas shouted, running towards the field.

They all chased after him, bursting through the doors and seeing Mike was already standing beside Will, trying to shake him. Steve and Max rushed ahead to see what was happening but noticed that Karmen had stopped.

"Oh my God" She gasped, looking at something above Will.

"What? What is it?" Steve asked, clearly not being able to see what she could.

"It's...it's a monster" She gulped, seeing the black swirling mass enveloping Will.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Just in case it wasn't clear at the beginning of the chapter it was Eleven calling to Karmen, and at the end it was Eleven who had been watching her conversation with Max. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: That's alright:)

Micky-Moo: Billy is definitely interested in Karmen now, as he's not stupid and knows there's more to her than meets the eye. He'll be using her to get to Steve quite a bit. Thanks for the review:)

RebornRose1992: Thanks for the review, here's the new chapter:)

19. Locker Room Fights

"What do you mean? What do you see?" Steve queried, as Joyce suddenly went rushing past them to her son.

"Will! Will!" She cried, as she held him by the shoulders.

"It's some sort of aura...like with the Demogorgon but bigger. Lot's bigger" She told him, as the black mass continued to swirl around Will.

"How much bigger?" Steve frowned.

"Probably about 80 foot bigger" She gulped.

"Will, wake up! Please wake up" Joyce begged her son.

"What's it doing?" Steve asked her, annoyed that he couldn't see anything.

"It's just circling him...but...I think it's getting smaller now" She realised.

"Well where's it going?" Steve inquired.

A moment later, Will's eyes abruptly opened, as even Joyce took a step back in shock.

"Wait I don't see it anymore...it's just disappeared" Karmen frowned.

"That's good, isn't it?" Steve suggested.

"Yeah...but where did it go?" Karmen mumbled.

Karmen frowned as Will walked over to them and she realised she could no longer see his usual blue aura. It was as if something was masking it.

"Is he okay?" Karmen questioned.

"Yes, he's fine now. We just need to get him home" Joyce told her, as

she rushed him past them.

"I thought everything to do with the Upside Down was over...but it's not, is it?" Steve theorised.

"Something's trying to get through" Karmen suggested.

The next day, Steve was trying to have a shower after being thrashed again by Billy, but his luck wasn't changing.

"So, I hear the Princess and the freak's brother both skipped yesterday and still haven't shown? Must be a coincidence, right?" Billy smirked, as he joined him.

"Do you ever stop talking?" Steve rolled his eyes.

"No need to get defensive, Harrington. There's plenty of bitches left in the sea" Billy went on.

"With charm like that, it's a mystery to why you're single" Steve retorted.

"What can I say? Just haven't found the right girl...although maybe that's about to change. I saw Karmen watching from the seats today...and that skirt she was wearing..." Billy trailed off, with a whistle.

"Don't talk about her" Steve growled, turning directly to face him.

"Why? What are you going to do about it?" Billy said, getting up in Steve's personal space.

Steve's hands were in fists, as he had to physically restrain himself from throwing Billy across the room. But he knew he couldn't. He was already doing badly in school, a fight in the locker rooms was not going to help that.

"You're pathetic" Billy laughed, as he put a towel around his waist.

"Whatever, man" Steve dismissed, grabbing his own towel and walking out of the showers to his locker.

"You know she's only friends with you is because she feels sorry for you, right? You only became friends after you alienated everyone from your life. She pities you" Billy continued, following him to his locker.

"At least she is my friend. You disgust her" Steve told him.

"Please...how long do you think she's going to be able to resist me?" Billy grinned.

"That's never going to happen" Steve shook his head, as he went to open his locker.

"She wanted me at Halloween...she'll want me again. And you know it" Billy stated, holding his locker door closed.

"She was just drunk. She has better taste than that" Steve pointed out.

"Better taste? Wait...you don't...holy shit, do you like her?" Billy mocked.

"What? No! Of course not. I meant...I didn't..." Steve stuttered, as Billy's grin grew.

"She'll leave you soon. Just like your mummy and daddy...and you'll be all alone-" Billy started, but he was cut off when Steve slammed him into the lockers, hands on his shoulders.

"There he is! Go on, King Steve. Show me what you've got!" Billy insisted.

Steve raised his hand back, about to hit Billy when he heard someone call his name from the side. He turned to see Karmen standing there, a shocked expression her face. He instantly backed away from Billy, ashamed that he had been so easily goaded. Before anyone could say anything, the coach came rushing in, clearly confused at the scene in front of him.

"I heard there was a fight going on" He frowned, as Tommy followed him.

Steve quickly put two and two together and realised that Billy must

have gotten Tommy to get the coach and was hoping to catch Steve hitting him. However, he hadn't expected Karmen to arrive.

"Uh, no Coach. We were just getting changed" Steve responded.

"Is that true, Hargrove? I heard a bang" The Coach asked.

"Steve just couldn't get his locker open and Billy was helping him" Karmen suggested.

"Right...well just hurry up and get changed. And you, Miss Dixon, shouldn't be in here" The coach pointed out, as Karmen put her hands up and began to walk away.

A few minutes after the coach left, Karmen came back into the changing rooms, where both boys now had their shorts on. There had been a tense silence ever since she left.

"You really think getting Tommy to do your dirty work is a good idea?" Karmen announced.

"I don't know what you're talking about, sweetheart" Billy grinned, as he turned to look at her.

He could barely contain his annoyance as he saw that her gaze was firmly on Steve, not even giving him a second's glance. He scoffed as Steve's obliviousness to her checking him out, and picked up his bag and left the room, shoving past Karmen as he did so.

"Thanks for having my back" Steve smiled at her.

"Always" She replied.

"How did she sound on the phone?" Steve asked, as they pulled up to the Byers house.

"She said everything was fine...but her voice was shaking. There's something wrong with Will. I can feel it" Karmen sighed.

"Do you think Jonathan will be there?" Steve questioned.

"No, she said he's gone somewhere with Nancy...I guess they're back together now" Karmen mumbled.

"It was only a matter of time I guess...hey, should I just stay out here? I mean, I've never exactly been nice to Jonathan" Steve pointed out.

"Joyce won't mind. Besides, I want you there. We need to find out what's going on" Karmen went on, as Steve nodded.

"Why did we become friends, Karmen?" Steve asked, out of the blue.

"What?" Karmen laughed, confused at the weird question.

"I'm guessing you didn't hear what Billy said in the lockers then" Steve mumbled.

"We became friends because I like you and your dorky ways, and you like the fact that fact that I give good hugs and always have food" She suggested, making him laugh.

They walked over to the house, that gave them both bad memories, and knocked on the door. A frazzled looking Joyce answered, surprised to see the pair there.

"Karmen? What are you doing here?" Joyce queried.

"We came to help" Karmen announced.

"He's better now" Joyce told her, as she went to close the door.

"I saw something...from the Upside Down. It was all around Will" Karmen blurted out.

"What was it?" Joyce inquired.

"I don't know, but it scared the crap out of me. You need our help, Joyce" Karmen insisted.

"...Alright, you better come in" She sighed, opening the door wide for the pair to enter.

"Okay...this is...different" Steve commented, his eyes widening as he looked around the room.

There were hundreds of pictures stuck to the walls, floor and ceiling, that all seemed to connect. It reminded Karmen of all the Christmas lights that Joyce had put up the year before.

"Where is he?" Karmen asked.

"He's in his room. He's pretty upset" A different voice told them, as Karmen turned to see Mike standing there.

"Do you really think you can help him?" Joyce asked.

"There's only one way to find out" Karmen answered, as she began to walk down the corridor.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I'm going to try and have Steve a bit more integrated into the storyline and interacting with more of the characters so that will be fun. There's also going to be more Billy coming up (he and Karmen will definitely not be getting together, don't worry). Please leave a review:)

teenwolfismylife101: Don't worry, it's not a stupid question, haha. I did explain it more in this chapter, but basically Karmen can see the creatures aura, but not the actual creature itself. Thanks for the review:)

RebornRose1992: Thank you!

Micky-Moo: Steve does need to get his act together, doesn't he? He and Karmen will be pushed closer together as the story continues and he starts to come to terms with his feelings.

Lisa: Aw, thank you so much:) I'm really glad you're enjoying this story!

20. Night Time Encounters

"Will?" Karmen called out, knocking on his bedroom door.

When no answer came she walked in, and instantly saw Will sitting on the bed, staring intently at the wall, clearly not having heard her. His shirt was soaking wet and it looked like he was sweating, even though Karmen could feel herself beginning to shiver from the cold.

"Will? It's me. Karmen" She spoke up, as Will's eyes jumped to hers.

"What are you doing here?" Will questioned, as Karmen looked away from him.

There was something about his eyes. They seemed so much darker than usual, and she couldn't bear to look.

"I was worried about you...after what happened at the school. How are you feeling?" She inquired.

"I...I don't know" Will admitted.

"That thing I saw surrounding you...what happened to it, Will?" She queried, sitting down on the bed next to him.

"I can feel him" Will mumbled.

"Feel who?" Karmen frowned.

"He's inside of me. He's in my head, Karmen" Will cried, as tears welled in his eyes.

"Hey, it's okay. We can fix this" Karmen insisted, pulling him into a side hug.

"I feel him more and more every second. He's whispering even now" Will told her.

"What's he saying?" Karmen asked.

"He doesn't like you being here..." Will trailed off.

"So...the house looks...nice..." Steve stuttered, as he sat down on Joyce's couch.

"It looks crazy. No need to sugar-coat it" Joyce sighed.

"No, no. It's...cosy" Steve replied, awkwardly.

"Why are you here? You're not Jonathan's friend, or Will's" Joyce blurted out.

"They're Karmen's friends...and I wanted to help" Steve shrugged.

"You're telling me you've really changed so much in a year? Gone from beating my son up to being a model citizen?" Joyce pointed out.

"Yeah um...about that. I'm sorry...I mean I've apologised to Jonathan but, you know I regret what I did. I let my anger get the better of me, I guess" Steve admitted.

"Well...I accept your apology then...I haven't seen a lot of Karmen lately. I wasn't sure if she was even still friends with Jonathan" Joyce confessed.

"He hurt her when he got with Nancy, so she's just backed off" Steve shrugged.

"I thought as much. He didn't...He didn't mean to hurt her" Joyce tried to cover for her son.

"It doesn't make it hurt any less" Steve mumbled.

"I'll be honest with you, Steve. He's left town with Nancy...It's looking like they might get back together" Joyce informed him.

"I know. It's alright. They love each other" He stated.

"That's very big of you to say" Joyce exclaimed.

"I'm trying this new thing called being mature" Steve joked.

"It looks like Karmen's been a good influence on you" Joyce

suggested.

"Yeah, she has" Steve said, with a small smile.

"Oh...oh! Are you and her...?" She trailed off.

"What? No. No, we're friends. Just friends" Steve shook his head.

"Will! Will, wait!" They heard Karmen shouting from down the hallway.

Instantly, Steve was on his feet, rushing over to the small brunette who was banging on Will's now closed door.

"What happened?" Steve asked.

"He said I shouldn't be here and then he just shoved me out" Karmen told him, as Joyce rushed over to them.

"Will, honey? What's wrong?" Joyce inquired, knocking on his door.

"She shouldn't be here, mum. I want her to go" Will insisted.

"It's okay, we'll go" Karmen nodded to an embarrassed looking Joyce.

"Hey, your arm..." Steve trailed off, when he saw the hand shaped bruise on her upper arm.

"It must have happened when he pushed me out" Karmen realised, as Steve placed his hand on her arm.

"But Will...he wouldn't hurt a fly. He has the strength of a wet paper towel" Joyce theorised.

"Not anymore. You need to be careful" Karmen warned her, as Joyce sadly nodded.

"Are you sure you're okay?" Steve insisted, softly stroking her arm just under where the bruise was.

"Yeah, I'm okay" She insisted, as Steve suddenly realised he was still holding onto her arm and quickly let go.

Joyce had to hide a smile when she saw this, noticing Steve's flustered reaction and the way Karmen's cheeks had reddened.

"Call me if you need anything. Anything at all" Karmen told her.

"I will" Joyce replied.

"C'mon, I'll drive you home" Steve smiled at Karmen.

Karmen frowned when her eyes shot open, trying to figure out what had woken her. She heard a large bang from her window and turned to see a figure looming there and let out a scream. Her frown deepened when she saw the figure wave at her, as she rubbed her eyes and realised it was none other than Steve.

"What the hell, Harrington?" She mumbled, as she got out of bed and opened her bedroom window for him.

He quickly jumped into the room, as she realised he was soaking wet from the storm that had been brewing outside.

"Steve, I know I said you're welcome here anytime but...it's 3:15 in the morning" Karmen grumbled, as she looked at the clock on her wall.

"I know, I'm sorry, but I had to see you..." Steve trailed off, a puddle forming under him from where his clothes were dripping.

"Hold on, let me grab you a towel. Or five" Karmen mumbled, as she walked to her bathroom and came back with a few.

Steve gratefully took them from her as he started to dry himself off, but she could see his shirt was never going to dry.

"Take your shirt off" She told him.

"Hey, I'm not that kind of guy" Steve joked, as she rolled her eyes.

"You're going to catch pneumonia otherwise" Karmen stated, as she went to her drawers and pulled out a shirt that Steve had left at hers.

"Thanks" He smiled, as she threw it his way.

Steve then stripped off his top, as Karmen couldn't help letting her eyes wander quickly down his chest. Unconsciously she licked her lips, as she noted the water droplets falling down his toned chest and looked away a moment later.

"So...why did you need to see me?" Karmen asked.

"I had a nightmare" Steve informed her, pulling the new shirt over his head, to Karmen's disappointment.

"Okay...not really sure where I come into this" Karmen pointed out.

"It was about you. You...died. That demo-whatever came back and it killed you and I couldn't do anything to stop it-" Steve began, as Karmen cut him off.

"I'm fine, Steve. Look, I'm right here" She insisted, seeing how freaked out he was.

"That's why I needed to see you" Steve admitted, taking a few steps towards her.

"Steve Harrington was worried about me? What did I do to deserve this honour?" Karmen mocked.

"I'm serious, Karmen. It seems like everything that happened last year is coming back. You almost died, remember? We all nearly did. I can't...I couldn't live with myself if something happened to you" Steve explained.

"Hey, it's okay. Nothing bad is going to happen to me. I can look after myself" Karmen told him.

"I need you to promise me that you're not going to put yourself in danger" Steve insisted.

"I can't just let them deal with this without me. They need me" Karmen retorted.

"Then I'll be there too. Just...don't do anything stupid...without me..."

I guess is what I'm trying to say?" Steve stuttered.

"I promise" Karmen nodded to him, as he suddenly pulled her into a hug.

She couldn't stop the massive smile that grew on her face as she felt his arms wrap around her and didn't even care that he was getting her pyjamas wet. Wait...what did she wear to bed tonight, she thought to herself. She looked down and realised she was only wearing an oversized top and panties and felt herself instantly blush. As they pulled away it seemed like Steve had realised this too and was currently trying to look anywhere but her bare legs.

"I should, um...be going" Steve mumbled, as he began to back away.

"No...I mean, you can stay here. That storm outside is still going" Karmen shrugged.

"Okay" Steve replied, not needing much persuasion.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I'm really enjoying writing Steve and Karmen's relationship, if only that stupid boy would realise his friend's feelings for him. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: Thank you, here's the new chapter!

Micky-Moo: He's advances definitely do seem to be pushing them together, don't they? Haha. Thanks for the review:)

21. Three's A Crowd

Karmen let out a content sigh as she felt the warmth of the sun pierce through her window, her first thought being that the storm must have finally stopped. The second thought was wondering why her pillow was moving up and down. Her eyes shot open as she realised her head was against Steve's chest, and looked down to where their legs were touching, only being kept apart by the thin tracksuit bottoms that Steve was wearing. She knew she should move, that it would be weird for her not to, but it felt so good. However, it was over far too quickly when Steve began to stir, and she had to push herself away.

"Um, when did I get into the bed?" Steve frowned.

"You were cold" Karmen shrugged, not being able to look him in the eye.

"Oh...thanks for letting me stay over last night" Steve exclaimed, his voice deep from only just having woken up.

"No problem" Karmen said with a small smile, as he stood up.

"You want a lift to school?" Steve inquired.

"Yeah, sure" Karmen nodded.

"Alright, I'll go bring the car around and then grab some clothes from my house" Steve announced, as he left the room.

Karmen frowned, confused as to why Steve seemed so desperate to leave the room. Had she done something wrong?

Steve let out a deep breath when he finally left the room and bit his lip. With Karmen's cute messy hair, and bare legs, he needed to get out of there quickly. It was making him feel things he knew friends weren't supposed to feel.

The whole day had been awkward for the both. The usual comfortable silence in the car on the way back from school was becoming unbearable. They had both noticed that Nancy and

Jonathan were still not back in school and figured that the pair had probably gotten back together. Karmen thought that she would have rather been in the car with them than Steve at that moment.

"Hey, look it's Dustin. Hey, Dustin!" Karmen called out, winding down her window.

She was desperate for any buffer between her and Steve, and the thirteen-year-old boy fit the bill pretty well.

"Oh, thank Jesus. We've got a code red, Karmen! A code red!" Dustin yelled, as he ran over to them.

"Woah, woah. Slow down" Karmen exclaimed, as he reached the car.

"No time. Steve, do you still have that bat?" Dustin questioned.

"Bat? What bat?" Steve frowned.

"The one with the nails" Dustin mocked, waving his hands about.

"Why?" Steve queried.

"I'll explain it on the way" Dustin answered, as he opened the back door and hopped in.

"Are you going to sit there with your mouth gaping or start driving?" Dustin insisted, a moment later.

"Okay, okay. No need to get your panties in a twist" Steve rolled his eyes, turning the gas on.

"Thirteen-year olds, am I right?" Karmen joked, making Steve laugh.

In response, Dustin took off his backpack and threw it at her, as she yelped out in pain, and rubbed her arm.

"Alright, play nice you two" Steve told them.

"He/she started it" The both mumbled, as Steve tried not to grin.

Dustin looked between the pair as night fell, Karmen who was

awkwardly twiddling her fingers and Steve who was intensely staring at the road.

"So...good day at school?" He questioned, as they both shrugged.

"It was alright" Karmen stated.

"Been better" Steve added.

"Huh, looks like a full moon tonight" Dustin realised, trying to think of anything to stop the silence.

"We're going monster hunting on a full moon, that's just...great" Karmen pointed out.

"So, hold up. How big?" Steve inquired.

"First it was like that. Now's it like this" Dustin explained, showing that it had doubled in size.

"Kinda like your hair over the past year" Karmen joked, as Steve fake laughed.

"I swear to god man, it's just some little lizard, okay?" Steve suggested.

"It's not a lizard!" Dustin maintained.

"How do you know?" Steve retorted.

"How do I know it's not?" Dustin clarified.

"Yeah, how do you know it's not a lizard?" Steve insisted.

"Because his face opened up and he ate my cat" Dustin informed them, as Steve took a few moments to process.

"Okay, I'm sold. Definitely not a lizard" Karmen agreed.

"Well how did you manage to catch it then?" Steve inquired.

"You've got the hair, I've got the brains, Steve" Dustin replied, as Steve looked offended.

"Hey!" Steve exclaimed.

"Yeah...you've got nice hair too, Dustin" Karmen grinned, as she ruffled his curly locks a little.

"Remind me never to be in a car with you two again" Steve groaned.

They soon arrived at Dustin's house, as Steve got the bat they had picked up from the back of his car.

"Do you really think that? That I'm dumb?" Steve couldn't help but ask, as they got closer to the cellar doors where the creature was supposed to be.

"What...I was just joking, Steve. Honestly. You're not dumb. At all" Karmen replied.

"I wasn't good enough for Nancy-" Steve started, but she cut him off.

"Then Nancy's dumb! Okay, any girl would be lucky to have you. You're good looking, caring, smart, you have your own car..." Karmen trailed off, when she saw the look that Dustin was giving her.

"Oh...girls really dig that stuff?" Steve frowned.

"Definitely" Karmen told him, as he began to bang on the cellar door.

"What was that about?" Dustin asked, a mischievous smile growing on his face.

"Don't go there, Dustin" Karmen warned him.

"Someone's touchy" Dustin grinned, as Karmen glared at him.

It had always been obvious to Dustin that Karmen liked Steve, but she had always seemed oblivious to her own feelings. But he could tell something had changed.

"Alright kid, I swear if this is some Halloween prank...your dead" Steve announced, shining the light in Dustin's face.

"It's not. Get that out of my face" Dustin grumbled.

"You got keys to this thing?" Steve questioned.

A few minutes later, Steve opened the doors and used his torch to peer down the stairs. Karmen was ready for a large creature to run up and attack them but it never came.

"Gentleman first" Karmen offered.

"You know that's not the phrase" Steve pointed out.

"In this situation it is" Karmen responded, giving him a sarcastic smile.

"He must be further down there. I'll stay up here in case he tries to escape" Dustin exclaimed, as Steve turned to give him an exasperated look.

As Karmen followed Steve down the dark stairs, she found her eyes drifting to the older boy's ass and scolded herself mentally. Eyes on the prize, Karmen, she thought to herself.

"I was really hoping it was prank..." Karmen trailed off, as she saw Steve hold up some shredded skin with his bat.

"Get down here!" Steve yelled to Dustin when he noticed something in the corner.

"Oh, shit" Dustin groaned, when he saw the skin on Steve's bat.

"Oh, shit!" Dustin said louder, when Steve gestured to the hole in the wall.

"No way" Dustin frowned, as Steve shined his torch down the long tunnel the creature had created.

"We are seriously screwed guys" Karmen panicked.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! These three are so much fun to write, so I couldn't resist. It seems like things are

finally going to start to heat up for Karmen and Steve's relationship. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Aw, thank you:) I'm so glad you like this story. Steve really is so cute isn't he? Haha.

22. Setting the Trap

"All right, so let me get this straight. You kept something you knew was probably dangerous in order to impress a girl who you just met?" Steve questioned.

They had gone to the store to buy three buckets of meat, and were carefully trailing the scraps along the forest, hoping to lead Dustin's pet, Dart, into their trap. The young boy had just been filling the two teenagers on how everything had happened.

"All right, that's grossly oversimplifying things" Dustin stated.

"I mean, why would a girl like some nasty slug anyway?" Steve asked.

"He has a point" Karmen added.

An interdimensional slug? Because it's awesome" Dustin retorted.

"Dustin, girls and boys like different things. Slugs? Not really high on girl's lists" Karmen informed him

"And even if she thought it was cool, which she didn't, I just...I don't know. I just feel like you're trying too hard" Steve told him.

"Well, not everyone can have your perfect hair, all right?" Dustin grumbled.

"It's not about the hair, man. The key with girls is just...just acting like you don't care" Steve shrugged.

"I'm sorry, what?" Karmen scoffed.

"It drives them nuts" Steve went on.

"Please don't listen to this bullshit, Dustin. Steve clearly has no idea what he is talking about" Karmen responded.

"Well then what is the key to girls?" Steve queried, raising an eyebrow.

"...To be yourself" Karmen shrugged.

"Oh my God...no" Steve laughed.

"What? It's true! A girl wants to be able to see the real you. Not some persona you put on" Karmen exclaimed, as she began to walk ahead of them.

"Well then what?" Dustin questioned.

"You just wait until, uh...until you feel it" Steve answered.

"Feel what?" Dustin frowned.

"It's like before it's gonna storm, you know? You can't see it, but you can feel it, like this, electricity, you know?" Steve went on.

"Oh, like in the electromagnetic field when the clouds in the atmosphere-" Dustin was cut off quickly.

"No, no, no. Like a...like a sexual electricity" Steve clarified.

"Oh...well what does feel like?" Dustin inquired.

"I guess your heart starts to speed up when you see them, and your palms get sweaty and you just...I don't feel happy whenever your with them" Steve explained, as Dustin noticed he was looking at Karmen's back.

"So that's when you kiss her?" Dustin suggested.

"No, whoa, whoa. Slow down, Romeo" Steve replied.

"Oh, Sorry" Dustin mumbled, confused.

"Sure, okay, some girls, yeah, they want you to be aggressive. You know, strong, hot and heavy, like a...I don't know, like a lion. But others, you gotta be slow, you gotta be stealthy, like a ninja" Steve went on.

"What type do you think Karmen is?" Dustin asked.

"What? Why do you ask?" Steve frowned.

"Well she's a girl. Shouldn't you be able to figure out which she is?" Dustin stated.

"Karmen's different" Steve shrugged.

"How?" Dustin queried.

"You'd probably have to be all those things and more to win her over" Steve suggested.

"So, you think she's special?" Dustin insisted.

"Of course, she is. She...she deserves the best" Steve mumbled.

"Then why were you letting Billy try to win her over?" Dustin inquired.

"What...how do you even know she and Billy had a thing?" Steve frowned.

"The girl I'm talking about...well, she's his sister" Dustin responded.

"Oh. Oh!" Steve exclaimed, surprised.

"Don't you think that maybe the reason that you think she's so special is because...you like her?" Dustin suggested, as Steve's eyes widened.

"What?! No. That's...that's crazy" Steve shook his head.

"That's too bad. Cause she likes you" Dustin shrugged, as Steve almost tripped over.

"She doesn't" Steve retorted.

"That's not what Billy thinks" Dustin informed him.

"Why? What did he say?" Steve asked.

"Max overheard him saying and I quote 'I see the way you look at him. It's just a shame he clearly doesn't feel the same way about you. Like at all'" Dustin said, using his fingers to create finger quotations.

"What did she say?" Steve insisted.

"Nothing...Max said she looked like she got punched in the gut" Dustin answered.

"So, she never said she liked me, then did she?" Steve pointed out.

"Did you not hear what she said about you earlier? Or is your hair so big that it covered your ears when she called you good looking?" Dustin argued.

"Hey!...She was just being a good friend" Steve shrugged.

"Do good friends usually look at your ass?" Dustin smirked.

"...Really?" Steve queried, looking very proud of himself.

"I mean why did you think she was upset about when you went back to Nancy?" Dustin theorised, as he began to walk ahead of the dumbfounded Steve.

They soon arrived at the abandoned junkyard that Karmen remembered well from when they had been hiding from the 'bad men'.

"Oh, yeah. This will do. Good call, dude" Steve congratulated Dustin, who grinned, proudly.

Steve continued dropping the meat, as Karmen noticed the stupid sunglasses he was wearing once again.

"You look like a douchebag" Karmen laughed.

"A hot douchebag though" Steve smirked, waiting to see what Karmen's reaction was.

However, before she could say anything, they heard someone call out to them. The three turned to see Lucas and Max heading their way, the girl looking a bit confused.

"Who's that?" Steve questioned, seeing the look on Dustin's face.

"That's Max" Karmen informed him.

"Your Billy's sister?" Steve asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Step-sister" Max clarified, obviously annoyed by the comment.

"I feel you on that" Steve mumbled.

They quickly set to work, trying to finish their trap before it got dark and was too dangerous to be outside. They were going to use the meat to lure Dustin's pet there, and then threw gasoline over the meat, hoping that they would be able to set the creature on fire and destroy it.

"Are we sure about having the kids here?" Karmen inquired, as she sat down next to Steve in the bus they had fortified.

"We can't do this by ourselves" Steve pointed out.

"It's dangerous" Karmen retorted.

"Don't worry, I'll protect you" Steve grinned at her, as she scoffed.

"I can protect myself and you know it" She smirked, opening her palm and creating a ball of blue electricity above it.

"Why can't you just show Max that? She'd have to believe you then" Dustin stated.

"She shouldn't even be here...the least exposed she gets to this, the better" Karmen replied.

"So, you both really fought one of these things before? And you're like a hundred percent sure it wasn't a bear?" Max questioned, as she peered down from the hatch, where she was sitting on the roof.

"Don't be an idiot, okay? It wasn't a bear. Why are you even here if you don't believe us? Just go home" Dustin rolled his eyes, as Max gave him a dirty look.

"Jeez, someone's cranky. Past your bedtime?" Max mocked, as she went to crawl away from the hatch and sit next to Lucas.

"That's good. Just show how you don't care" Steve told him, as Karmen groaned.

"I don't" Dustin shrugged, as Steve winked in his direction.

"Why are you winking, Steve? Stop" Dustin mumbled, as Steve gave him an amused look.

"You honestly give the worst relationship advice. You're just pushing her away, Dustin" Karmen warned him.

"Like I said...I don't care" Dustin repeated, as he went to sulk in the corner.

"Well how Billy get you to kiss him then?" Steve asked.

"What?" Karmen frowned.

"On Halloween. What did he do that made him so irresistible?" Steve questioned.

"Oh, wouldn't you like to know" Karmen laughed.

"Maybe I would" Steve replied, in a low tone.

Karmen turned to look at him, surprised, when suddenly they heard a loud howl from outside. The creature had arrived.

Author's Notes: I hoped you all enjoyed this chapter! Sorry it took so long to update, I've been super busy. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Aw, thank you so much! Yep, things are going to start getting intense from here on out. They're pretty cute aren't they?

23. Attack

They watched from the boarded window as Dart appeared in the distance but didn't seem to want to get any closer. Karmen began to wonder if the creature was smart enough to know it was a trap.

"He's not taking the bait. Why is he not taking the bait?" Steve asked, beginning to panic.

"Maybe he's not hungry" Dustin suggested.

"Maybe he's sick of cow" Steve realised, as he stepped back from the window.

Karmen's eyes connected with Steve's for a moment and she quickly put two and two together, when he started to walk to the door.

"Steve? Steve! Don't even think about it!" Karmen exclaimed, as he picked up his bat.

"Just get ready" Steve replied, as he threw his lighter towards Dustin.

"Stop! It's too dangerous" Karmen insisted, as she blocked his way to the door.

"We can't just wait until it tries to attack us. I'm doing this" Steve shook his head.

"No, I won't let you" Karmen retorted, backing into the doorway.

"Hey, I'll be alright. Don't worry" Steve told her, touching her face lightly, as he leaned down and pressed a kiss to her forehead.

This seemed to throw Karmen off for a moment and allowed Steve to grab the handle to the door and slide it open. Karmen let out an angry sound as she realised he had tricked her, as he stepped out into the dark.

"Dammit" She sighed, as she followed him outside.

"What are you doing?" Steve frowned, as she closed the door behind

her.

"You're not doing this alone. Can't let you take all the glory, can I?" She said, giving him a small grin, which he returned.

"Stay behind me" Steve announced, as he cautiously began to step forward, swinging his bat around.

"Come on, buddy" Steve called out, as he began to whistle.

"Come on, dinner time. Human taste better than cat I promise" Steve insisted, as they stopped at the large pile of meat.

As the smoke cleared in front of them, they were able to see that the creature had grown even bigger and both felt a cold chill run down their spines. Karmen raised out her hand and began to create a ball of electricity, hoping it would be enough to stun the creature. She heard something rustle to her right and turned to see three other creatures just like Dart had been creeping up on them.

"Oh shit" Karmen mumbled.

"What?" Steve frowned, as he turned and saw them.

"Oh shit!" Steve repeated, with more fear.

"Steve! Karmen! Abort, abort!" Dustin shouted, as he opened the door to the bus.

"Stay back, Dustin!" Karmen warned him.

A moment later, Dart was hurling towards Steve who managed to jump out of the way just in time and rolled over the hood of a car which Dart flew into. He didn't even have time to catch his breath before another creature lunged at him, which he whacked with his bat. Meanwhile, Karmen had managed to hit one of the demodogs head on with her electricity and was pretty sure she had killed it. She managed to duck as the other one leapt at her, meaning it went flying over her head.

"Run! Run, guys!" They both heard the kids yell.

Steve was quickly rushing towards the open door, two of the creatures hot on his tail. Karmen pushed herself upright and began to run after him. She saw Steve jump onto the bus and was only a few metres away when she felt a sharp pain in her ankle. She looked down to see one of the creatures had its head wrapped around her lower leg, as she screamed in pain.

"Karmen!" She heard Steve cry.

Without a second's thought, she grabbed the creature by its neck and sent a violent burst of electricity through the creature's body, killing it instantly. She then turned and began limping towards the bus where the others were screaming. One of the demodogs was in the doorway, as Steve tried to push it back with his bat, but the creature was too strong. It grabbed the bat with its teeth and sent it flying backwards. Karmen quickly grabbed the bat and snuck up on the monster, bringing the sharp spikes down on its back, hard. It yelped in surprise and turned towards her, growling angrily.

"Come on! Come and get me!" Karmen shouted, swinging the bat around.

"What are you doing?!" Steve yelled.

"Saving your life" Karmen replied, giving him a sad smile.

Before Steve could say anything else, Karmen was rushing away from the bus, as fast as her injured leg could carry her. The group watched in horror as the two demodogs chased after her, as they lost sight of them in the fog.

"Karmen!" Steve called out.

Suddenly they all heard an eerie wail in the distance, as a demodog howled in response, almost like they were communicating. Dart came hurtling past them and didn't even spare them a second glance. Steve was instantly rushing towards where the creature had come from, with the kids following close behind.

"Karmen? Karmen, where are you?" Steve shouted.

His heart almost stopped when he found her. She was lying on her

side, facing away from him, as blood pooled beneath her.

"No. No!" Steve cried, as he ran towards her.

He instantly crouched down and took her in his arms, holding her close to his body.

"I'm so sorry. This is all my fault. I can't lose you. I...I..." Steve stuttered, tears flowing down his face, as he couldn't get his words out.

"Steve, your kind of crushing me right now" Karmen mumbled, shocking him.

"You're okay?!" He questioned, as he pulled back.

"I'll live" She grimaced, as he took a closer look.

Her arm was bleeding badly from where he could see one of the creatures must have bitten her, but apart from a few cuts she didn't seem to have anymore wounds.

"What were you going to say?" Karmen asked, referring to what he had been going to say before he got choked up.

"Um...well I guess that I-" Steve was cut off, as the kids suddenly surrounded them.

"Oh my God, you're alive!" Lucas exclaimed.

"That was amazing!" Dustin congratulated her.

"Wow, you managed to kill another one" Max added, spotted a dead demodog only a couple of metres away.

Steve couldn't help the small groan that came from his lips, feeling that the moment had come and gone. He began to take off his jacket and let Karmen tie it around her arm to help stop the bleeding.

"We need to get you to a hospital" Steve insisted.

"No, we can't do that. I'm supposed to stay under the radar,

remember? Turning up in ED with bite wounds all over me is pretty much the opposite of that" Karmen explained.

"You're hurt. You need help" Steve replied.

"Then let's head back into town, I'll pick up some medical supplies" Karmen shrugged, but Steve still didn't look happy.

"Hey, I'm fine. I promise" She told him, running her hand down his arm.

"Alright, let's get going then" Steve nodded, as he placed her arm over his shoulder and helped push her upright.

"I can walk-" Karmen began, but he cut her off.

"It's this or I carry you" Steve informed her, as she put her good arm up in a mock defeat gesture, a tiny smile of her face.

Author's Notes: I hope you all liked this chapter! I'm so sorry with how long this chapter took, I've had a very busy month. Did Steve almost admit his feelings for Karmen? Looks like it. Do I love torturing you guys? Looks like it, haha. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: Thank you for the review:) Here's the new update!

Micky-Moo: I love Dustin, he's so adorable. Steve will begin to man up from here on out, I promise, haha. Thanks for the review:)

24. Guess Who's Back

"Do you have any of the vodka from setting the trap, in your bag?" Karmen questioned, making Steve frown.

"Are you celebrating something I don't know about?" Steve asked.

"It's for the pain and to clean my wounds" Karmen retorted, as Steve made an 'oh' sound.

As soon as he handed her the bottle, she was gulping the contents down in a way that Steve had never seen away do before. Karmen quickly noticed the looks she was getting from everyone and brought the bottle away from her lips.

"It hurts a bit more than I'm letting on-" Karmen started, but Steve quickly cut her off.

"That's it. We're going to the hospital" Steve insisted.

"It's fine. Look, I can even stand on one leg" Karmen suggested, but when she tried to do so, she began to wobble and Steve had to catch her.

"Remind me next time...blood loss and vodka...it works quick" She mumbled, as Steve sighed.

"Come on, up we go" Steve said, as he pulled her into his arms and picked her up bridal style.

"I'm not some damsel in distress, Steve" Karmen mumbled, as her head lolled against his shoulder.

"Yeah, sure you're not. Just rest" Steve told her, as she felt her vision begin to blur.

She was in and out of consciousness for some time, and only began to wake up when she heard new voices surrounding her.

"What happened to her?" She could hear Nancy cry, as she began to open her eyes.

"Are you okay?!" Jonathan questioned, obviously panicked.

"It's just a scratch" Karmen shrugged off, as Steve rolled his eyes.

"Her wounds still bleeding" Steve informed them.

"I've got a first aid kit in my car, hang on" Jonathan exclaimed, as he ran off.

"What did this?" Nancy frowned, looking at Karmen's arm.

"Demo-dogs" Dustin sighed.

"Demo-whats?" Nancy inquired, as Jonathan ran back to them.

She then began falling asleep again, hearing Steve calling out her name as her eyes closed. The next time she opened them she was on a familiar looking couch and realised she was in the Byer's home.

"Hey, hey. It's okay. You're okay" Steve told her, giving her a small smile.

"How did I get here?" Karmen asked, as she tried to push herself up.

"You need to rest" Steve insisted, as he gently laid her back down on the couch.

She looked over to where Will was lying on the other couch, looking a ghostly white colour. Jonathan was holding onto his hand tightly, a guilty expression on his face, as Nancy placed her hand on his shoulder.

"Looks like they're back together" Karmen mumbled.

"Well, some people are meant to be, I guess" Steve mumbled, as he looked at Karmen.

Before she could say anything, she was suddenly being trampled on by numerous thirteen-year olds. She laughed, as she tried to hug them all back at once.

"It'll take more than a demo-dog to kill me" Karmen stated.

"See! Karmen thinks it's a good name" Dustin huffed.

"She's clearly delirious" Lucas retorted.

"It is pretty lame" Max added.

"You would agree with him" Dustin mumbled.

"I'm glad to see you're all your usual selves" Karmen giggled, as she ruffled Dustin's hair, who shoved her off him.

She quickly noticed the far away look on Mike's face, and how he wasn't interacting with the other kids. Something must have happened, Karmen realised.

"What's wrong?" Karmen frowned.

"It's Bob..." Mike trailed off.

"Joyce's boyfriend?" Karmen clarified, as Mike nodded.

"The demo-dogs got him" Dustin announced, as Karmen's eyes widened.

"He's dead?" Karmen gulped, as the group of kids nodded.

"He died saving us. And we're just sitting here doing nothing!" Mike yelled, clearly angry.

"Hey! Stop that. There's no point in running off and getting ourselves killed" Steve scolded him.

"What's wrong with Will?" Karmen queried, seeing that the young boy still hadn't moved.

"He's been possessed" Dustin told her.

"By what?" She asked.

"...We don't really know" Dustin admitted.

The kids had soon filled Karmen in with as much as they could and were now calling the creature controlling everything the 'Mind

Flayer'. She had tried to get up to listen to what they were all planning in the kitchen, but Steve quickly ordered her back to the couch. She knew she wasn't going to be much help considering she could barely stand up for more than a few seconds without feeling dizzy.

"You seemed really worried back there" Nancy announced, as she helped Jonathan layer the walls of the shed.

Their plan to interrogate Will so close to the house worried her, but it was the best choice out of a bad bunch.

"Which time? When we were running from demo-dogs or being told that a shadow monster wants to kill us all?" Steve mocked.

"When Karmen passed out" Nancy clarified.

"We all were" Steve shrugged.

"But you were more worried" She insisted.

"What do you want me to say, Nance?" Steve sighed.

"Do you like her?" Nancy couldn't help but ask.

"Are you hoping I do?" Steve retorted.

"Honestly? Yeah, I think I am" Nancy admitted.

"I never thought that she could like me but after today...I don't know-" Steve started, but Nancy cut him off.

"She likes you. A lot" Nancy laughed.

"How'd you know?" Steve inquired.

"Trust me. A girl just knows. You'd be good together" Nancy pointed out.

"I don't want to lose our friendship just because I let my...feelings get in the way" Steve explained, emphasising the word feelings.

"Steve, she saved your life today. If that doesn't tell you how she

feels...I don't know what will" Nancy retorted.

Karmen woke up suddenly, when everyone began piling into the living room, as Hopper came in carrying two guns.

"What's happening?" Karmen frowned, standing up.

"They found us" Mike announced.

"The demo-dogs are coming here?" Karmen queried, as Steve nodded, holding up his trusty bat.

"Do you know how to use this? Can you use this?" Hopper asked Jonathan, who looked unsure.

"I can" Nancy piped up, as she grabbed the shotgun and held it up.

"Guys get behind me" Karmen mumbled, as she pushed all the children backwards.

"Karmen, you can't fight" Steve insisted.

"Last line of defence" Karmen replied.

They soon began to hear numerous growls from outside, and quickly figured out that the creatures were circling them. Steve stood protectively in front of Karmen, making sure to shield her and the kids. Suddenly, there was a screeching howl and then a moment later one of the demo-dogs was thrown through the window. They all jumped back in shock, as Hopper went to inspect the still body of the creature.

"Holy shit" Dustin mumbled.

"Is it dead?" Max queried, as Hopper pressed against it's face with his foot.

"Just in case..." Karmen trailed off, as she took the bat from Steve's hand.

She then brought the spiked bat down, hard, onto the demo-dog, as

she heard the kids cries of disgust behind her.

"Now it's definitely dead" She grimaced, handing the bat back to Steve.

"Where have you been all my life?" Steve joked, making Karmen laugh.

A moment later, they all heard a small clicking from behind them and saw how the front door seemed to unlock by itself. They all held their weapons up, as Karmen's frown deepened. She was surprised when she saw the chain lock on the door also moved, as if there was an invisible force that they just couldn't see. It was almost like...

"Eleven" Karmen mumbled, as her eyes widened.

She was walking towards the door before anyone could stop her, not bothering to listen to their shouts from behind her. The door swung open as a figure emerged from the shadows. Karmen could feel her heart stop, as tears instantly began to well in her eyes. Brown eyes stared back at her, happiness in them as clear as day. Eleven was alive.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Sorry that it took so long to update, I won't lie I did forget about this story for a hot minute. I'm still disappointed that we haven't got a release date for season 3 as clearly it means this story will have to go on hiatus for quite a while. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: He really is, isn't he? I love Steve and Karmen's relationship with the kids. Thank you for the review:)

25. Trouble Arrives

Karmen instantly pulled the smaller girl into a hug, feeling tears running down her face, but she didn't care. Eleven was back.

"You're really here" Karmen sighed in relief, as Eleven hugged her back, tightly.

"I'm sorry I let you think I was dead...I...I had to" Eleven stuttered.

"What?" Karmen frowned, as they pulled away.

Mike quickly took her place, as he wrapped his arms around Eleven, a big smile on his face. He told her how he had called her everyday since she disappeared, and Karmen couldn't help but feel bad. Why did Mike believe Eleven was alive, when she hadn't?

"Why didn't you tell me you were there? That you were okay?" Mike inquired.

"Because I wouldn't let her" Hopper announced.

"The hell is this? Where have you been?" Hopper asked, taking in her appearance.

"Where have you been?" Eleven retorted, as he gave her a one-armed hug.

"You've been hiding her...you've been hiding her this whole time!" Mike realised, as he shoved Hopper.

"Hey! Let's talk. Alone" Hopper advised, as he and Mike left the room.

"I'm so sorry, Eleven. I really thought you were dead" Karmen admitted, ashamed.

"I know...I saw you. I didn't want you to be upset but it was too dangerous to contact you" Eleven explained.

"I'm not mad at you...Hopper is another story" Karmen stated, as she glared towards the room Hopper had entered.

"What happened to your arm?" Eleven questioned, her eyes widening.

"Hm? Oh yeah. Guess it proves you stronger than me. One of the demo-dogs got me" Karmen exclaimed.

"Will you be okay?" Eleven queried, starting to get panicked.

"I'll be fine" Karmen insisted, placing her hand on Eleven's shoulder.

"Your hair however...now that is past saving" Karmen giggled, as she ruffled Eleven's hair, who playfully shoved her off.

Once Mike and Hopper had finished their talk, it was time for Karmen to say her two cents.

"You know what? Not telling Mike...I get it. He's a kid. But me? She's like my sister!" Karmen accused, the moment Hopper had closed the door.

"You're sixteen, you're not an adult yet whether you like it or not" Hopper argued.

"I could have handled it" Karmen retorted.

"It would have put your life in danger, and everyone you care about!" Hopper pointed out.

"That's just the thing, Hopper...I don't have any family. Eleven at one point was literally my only friend" Karmen exclaimed.

"Well not anymore" Hopper replied.

"A bunch of thirteen-year olds and ex friends don't really count" Karmen sighed.

"What about Harrington then? He certainly seems to care" Hopper said, raising an eyebrow.

"It should have been my choice to make. Not yours" Karmen insisted.

"Fine. I'm sorry, okay? I'm making this up as I go, just like the rest of us" Hopper confessed.

"You're lucky I feel like I'm about to pass out, or I'd be kicking your ass right now" Karmen warned.

"Sure thing, kid" Hopper chuckled.

Karmen sat down at the table, as the group went over what they knew. From when they had tried to interrogate Will he had told them they needed to close the gate to the Upside Down, which was much bigger than before and now swarming with demo-dogs.

"I can do it" Eleven announced.

"You're not hearing me" Hopper told her.

"I'm hearing you. I can do it" Eleven insisted.

"No way. It's too dangerous" Karmen shook her head.

"If I don't do this more people will die" Eleven argued.

"And if you do this then you could die" Karmen pointed out.

"I'll be there to protect her" Hopper exclaimed.

"...Well then I'm coming to" Karmen suggested.

"Hell no. You can hardly stand" Steve interjected.

"She's right. You'd just get in the way. I'll keep her safe. I promise" Hopper stated, as Karmen sighed.

"Even if El can, there's still another problem. If the brain dies, the body dies" Mike began.

"I thought that was the whole point" Max frowned.

"It is, but if we're really right about this...I mean, if El closes the gate and kills the mind flayer's army..." Mike trailed off.

"Will's a part of that army" Lucas realised.

"Closing the gate will kill him" Mike clarified, as Joyce looked like

the ground had fallen away beneath her.

"Then we have to disconnect him. Pull the plug?" Karmen went on.

"How?" Mike questioned.

"He likes it cold" Joyce mumbled, as she began walking towards Will's room, as everyone followed her.

"What?" Hopper inquired.

"It's what Will kept saying to me. He likes it cold. We keep giving it what it wants" Joyce insisted, as she shut the window in Will's bedroom.

"If this is like a virus, and Will's the host then..." Nancy trailed off.

"Then we need to make the host uninhabitable" Jonathan suggested.

"We have to burn it out of him" Joyce grimaced.

"You'll need to do it at the same time they're closing the gate. So this 'mind flayer' thing is distracted" Karmen advised them.

"We have to do it somewhere he doesn't know this time" Mike reminded them.

"Yeah, somewhere far away" Dustin added.

"I think I know just the place" Hopper announced.

"Swear to me you'll be careful" Karmen pleaded, as she said goodbye to Eleven on the front porch.

"I will. Promise" Eleven nodded.

"If anything feels too dangerous, you don't have to-" Karmen started, but she cut her off.

"I can do this" Eleven repeated, just like she had earlier.

"I believe you. You're stronger than all of us put together" Karmen

smiled at her.

"I'll be back" Eleven grinned, as she began to walk away.

"Wait...was that a Terminator reference?" Karmen realised, confused.

"...I used my sight to watch it in theatres" Eleven admitted.

"Eleven! It's rated R!" Karmen exclaimed, slapping her arm, lightly.

"You're sixteen and you've seen it" Eleven retorted.

"Oh God, you're really thirteen now, aren't you?" Karmen laughed.

Karmen could barely contain her laughter as watched Steve pull the dishcloth off his shoulder and almost hurled it towards the kids, as he argued with them. She wasn't sure what it was about but seeing Steve act so motherly was almost the high point of her year. A moment later she heard a loud engine out front and wondered whether one of the groups had already returned. Max ran over to the window and almost jumped on top of Karmen and recognised a familiar car.

"It's my brother" Max gulped, as Lucas joined her on the couch.

"He can't know I'm here. He'll kill me. He'll kill us" Max warned them.

"What are we going to do?" Lucas panicked, knowing he would get the brunt of any attack from Billy.

"I've got this" Karmen announced, as she stood up from the couch.

"No way" Steve shook his head.

"I'll distract him" Karmen suggested.

"No. I'll go out there" Steve replied.

"You're not really his type, Steve" Karmen said, laughing lightly at her own joke.

"You can barely stand!" Steve exclaimed, as she went to open the door.

"I don't think that will really matter to him. Just get the kids out of here" Karmen grimaced, as she pulled the door open before he could say another word.

"Well, well, well. Karmen Dixon. Aren't you a sight for sore eyes?" Billy grinned, as he saw her step out of the house.

"I wish I could say the same about you, Billy" Karmen sighed, as she approached him.

Billy stripped off his leather jacket, putting his barely buttoned shirt on full display. He's still interested then, Karmen thought to herself.

"The hell happened to you?" Billy frowned, taking in her bandaged arm, and ripped up trousers.

"I got in fight" Karmen shrugged.

"Bit of a bad girl after all, huh?" Billy suggested, coming to stand only inches away from her.

The kids and Steve watched this all from inside the house and were just close enough to be able to hear what was being said. Dustin noticed Steve's fist was clenched, on top of the couch, his knuckles completely white.

"You should see the other guy" Karmen smirked, not backing down.

"I'm here for my sister. I think you know her. Redhead. Bit of a bitch" Billy announced.

"You know when you speak so highly of women like that...it really turns me on" Karmen scoffed, her irritation at the comment piercing through her act.

"You know that's what I like about you, Karmen. You're feisty. That's hard to find in a girl round here" Billy went on.

"Please don't give me the 'you're not like other girls' line or I might puke" Karmen replied.

"Right, I forget...your more about action than words" Billy went on,

as he snaked his hands around her waist.

"That's more like it" Karmen exclaimed, as she ran her hands up Billy's arms and over his shoulders.

"Wow, she's really going for it" Lucas stated, both his eyebrows raised.

"If they kiss, I'm definitely going to throw up" Max grimaced.

"It's just for show, Steve. All an act" Dustin insisted, as he patted Steve's shoulder, who looked almost ready to snap.

"I don't know man, she kind of looks-" Lucas began, as Dustin slapped him round the head.

"So...my sister. Have you seen her?" Billy mumbled, their faces close.

"Nope. Can't say I have" Karmen replied.

"Then you don't mind if I look around?" Billy suggested.

"Of course, not...but there's better things we could be doing with our time..." Karmen trailed off, licking her lips, as Billy's eyes followed this motion.

Not needing anymore hints, Billy pressed his lips against hers, and pulled her closer to him all in one swift motion. Karmen responded to this by tangling her hands into his hair, which led him to deepen the kiss. She felt his tongue against her bottom lip, letting her mouth part and give him entrance. She could feel herself getting lost in the kiss, until she felt his hand go lower and gave a quick squeeze of her ass, as she had to stop herself from rolling her eyes. A gentleman as ever, she thought to herself.

"That's enough!" A voice boomed from behind them, as they pulled away.

She turned to see a furious looking Steve storming over to them, and bit her lip. He had clearly been watching the whole thing instead of getting the kids out. And he looked pissed.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! So Stranger Things Season 3 is finally back July 4th, which I'm so excited about. However, I think we've got no more than five chapters of this season left so I will be going on hiatus a while until it airs. We're finally going to get somewhere with Karmen and Steve's relationship I promise, haha. Billy and Karmen definitely do have a connection, but he's just too much of an asshole for it to go anywhere tbh. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: I hope you like this update:)

Micky-Moo: Thanks for the review:) It's going to be fun seeing how Eleven and Karmen interact now they're a bit older.

The true Hero of Skill: Thank you! I hope you like this chapter:)

26. He'll Never Want You

"Harrington, why am I not surprised?" Billy almost groaned, clearly wanting to get back to the kiss.

"Steve, don't-" Karmen started, but he cut her off.

"Get your filthy hands off her!" Steve insisted, as he approached them.

"Now we're finally getting somewhere! Why don't you make me?" Billy grinned, his hands still wrapped tightly around Karmen's waist.

Instinctively, Steve raised his arms out and pulled Karmen away from Billy, as she almost fell into his chest. He kept a protective arm around her waist, as Billy glowered at him.

"Just get out of here, Billy. No one wants you here" Steve told him.

"She sure seemed to a moment ago" Billy smirked, his eyes connecting with Karmen's.

"Well then respect me changing my mind and fuck off" Karmen retorted.

"Guess I can see who wears the trousers in your relationship, huh?" Billy teased, as Steve rolled his eyes.

"C'mon, Steve. Let's go" Karmen advised him, as they both went to turn around.

"You still haven't told him, have you?" Billy called after them, making Steve stop.

"Told me what?" Steve frowned, his hand falling from her waist.

"When are you going to face the facts, Karmen? I'm the best you're ever going to get. He'll never want you!" Billy exclaimed, a strange hurt tone in his voice.

"Shut up, Billy" Karmen warned him.

"No. You know what, if I'm going to get rejected...maybe you should to?" Billy suggested, as Karmen's eyes widened.

"Don't" She insisted.

"What the hell are you two talking about?" Steve asked, clearly confused.

"Are you really that oblivious, Harrington? She's in love with you! Has been for a long time by the looks of it" Billy informed him, as Steve turned to look at Karmen who couldn't meet his eyes.

"Karmen...is that true?" Steve questioned, as she bit her lip.

"It's always going to be Nancy for him. And you'll only ever be the sad orphan he feels sorry for-" Billy started but didn't get to finish his sentence as Karmen had stormed forward and hit him.

Billy stumbled back, not expecting such a hard punch and realised that his nose had begun to bleed. Karmen cradled her hand to her chest, as she slowly realised what she had just done. Billy turned to her with a furious look in his eyes, and before she could do anything else, he had raised his fist to her. She slammed hard to the ground, her head knocking painfully against the concrete. She then realised she had fallen onto her bad arm, which had begun to bleed underneath her profusely. Billy had the good sense to look remorseful as he realised just how badly he had injured Karmen.

"You son of a bitch!" Steve yelled, as he lunged at him, throwing them both to the ground.

He was able to get in a few punches before Billy managed to roll them over and knocked their heads together, making Steve blackout for a few seconds. Billy pushed himself up, and noticed the familiar redhead inside the house, that had been watching everything. He stormed over to the house, as Steve slowly pushed himself up and rushed over to Karmen.

"Are you okay?" Steve questioned, as he pulled her into a sitting position so he could have a better look at her arm.

"I'm fine. Go after him, he'll hurt the kids" Karmen stated, but Steve

was still transfixed on Karmen's bleeding arm.

"Steve! We said we'd protect them!" Karmen insisted, as Steve nodded, and rushed back into the house.

She managed to stand up after a few seconds, and began to stumble towards the house, her hand covering the wound on her arm. She was just in time to see Steve approaching an angry looking Billy.

"You're dead, Sinclair! You're so dead!" Billy shouted.

"No...you are" Steve exclaimed, as he punched Billy in the face, hard.

Billy let out a manic laugh in response, seeming to enjoy all the beatings he was getting.

"Looks like you've got some fire in you after all, huh? I've been waiting to meet this King Steve everyone has told me so much about" Billy grinned.

"Get out" Steve told him, pushing him away with two fingers, as a cold expression washed over Billy's face.

Billy then raised his arm out to hit Steve, who ducked and managed to get his own punch in, throwing Billy backwards. Billy laughed as Steve hit him two more times, until he was pressed against the kitchen sink. Without warning, Billy grabbed a nearby plate and slammed it down on Steve's head, who was disorientated for a moment.

"Steve!" Karmen cried, as the kids realised for the first time that she was there.

He then hit Steve again, pushing him into the living room, and then grabbed him by the lapels of his jacket.

"No one tells me what to do" Billy growled, as he headbutted Steve, sending him to the floor.

Billy sat on top of Steve and began to pummel his face, an insane expression on his own. The kids looked helplessly at Karmen, as they didn't know what to do, but she could barely stand upright, let alone

take on Billy. Without warning, Max grabbed a syringe from behind them and crept up to Billy, pushing the needle into his neck. However, before she could administer hardly any of the substance, he pushed her off him and sent her flying backwards.

"You little shit! You'll pay for that" Billy warned her, as he stood up.

Max shuffled away, as Karmen raised her hand out, a dark blue orb beginning to flicker to life on her palm. The kids all looked at her in awe, as the electric pulse began to grow bigger and bigger.

"Go to hell, Billy" Karmen exclaimed, as she threw the orb towards him, making a direct hit to his chest.

Billy was flung roughly against the door, electricity crackling all around him, as he slid down. Karmen thought for an awful second that she might have killed him, but his eyes flickered open seconds later. She guessed that seeing as she was in such a weakened state, her powers must have been too, otherwise she knew he'd be dead.

"What...what are you?" Billy mumbled, his eyes shining with fear.

Max then grabbed Steve's bat from nearby, and raised it above her head, seeing an opportunity.

"From here on out, you leave me and my friends alone. Do you understand?" Max warned him, as Billy gave no reply, his eyes still firmly locked with Karmen's.

Max then brought the bat down hard, only inches away from crotch, which quickly got his attention.

"Say you understand! Say it! Say it!" Max screamed.

"I understand" Billy all but whispered.

"What?" Max questioned, wanting something more.

"I understand" Billy said, louder this time, just before passing out.

"Damn" Dustin and Lucas both stated, in awe of Max.

"What a wuss, passing out like that" Mike mocked, as he kicked Billy's leg lightly.

"Yeah, what a wuss-" Karmen was cut off, as she fell to the floor, passing out too.

"...Now what?" Dustin questioned, after a moment of silence.

Karmen slowly started to wake up, as she heard Steve's voice, and her eyes fluttered open. She realised that she had been laying on his chest, and quickly sat upright, her head aching as she did so.

"Uh guys, I think we're going to have two problem passengers in a second" Mike exclaimed, from beside her.

"What's...what's going on?" Karmen stuttered, as she found she was in a car.

"Oh my God" Steve groaned, as he and Karmen both realised that Max was the one driving.

"Relax, she's driven before" Dustin told them, holding an ice pack to Steve's head.

"Yeah, in a parking lot" Mike retorted.

"That counts" Dustin stated.

"Oh my God...oh my God" Steve panicked.

"They were going to leave you both behind. I told them you'd be cool" Dustin explained.

"Cool?! This is not cool! This is very not cool!" Karmen insisted, as Max only sped up.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Stop the car. Slow down!" Steve ordered.

"We're all gonna die" Karmen mumbled.

"I told you they'd freak out" Mike argued.

"Everybody shut up! I need to focus" Max announced.

"Oh, wait, that's Mount Sinai. Make a left" Lucas realised, as he looked at the map.

"What?" Max frowned.

"Make a left!" Lucas yelled, as Max did as she was told, knocking over a letterbox as she did so.

They all screamed, as Karmen and Steve clung together, expecting a huge crash to come. When it didn't, Steve let out a sigh of relief, as Karmen noticed his face.

"What are those?" Karmen giggled, seeing the colourful band-aids littering his face.

"We're about to die...and you're laughing" Steve stated, as Karmen turned his head so he could see his own reflection in the mirror.

"Oh great" Steve grumbled.

"Don't worry, Steve. You still look good to me" Karmen grinned.

Before Steve could say anything the car was jumping down another hill, forcing the pair to let out another loud scream.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! **Steve and Karmen will have the heart to heart you've all been waiting for next chapter!** I'm just cruel and I love slow burn, haha. Please leave a review:)

tazsgirl6969: Thanks for the review, here's the new update:)

Micky-Moo: You've got to love Daddy Steve, haha. I'm so glad you liked the chapter:) I'm sorry to hear about your daughter, my prayers are with you. I've had a family member diagnosed with cancer recently myself, it's a horrible illness. I hope my story can take your mind off things if only for a little while.

storyofmanyways: I'm glad you liked it, I found it pretty funny too:)

zaneri0t: Aw, thank you so much:) That's great to hear! It's weird to think when I first started writing this story it was going to be a Jonathan/OC, haha.

27. Just Kiss Already!

A/N: I don't usually do this but I have published a new story that is very dear to my heart and it would mean a lot to me if you guys could check it out! It's called Somebody to Die For and is a Supernatural fanfic. Here is the link </s/13199790/1/Somebody-To-Die-For> or alternatively you can click on my profile and view it there. Thank you:) I hope you enjoy the new chapter!

They had been driving for almost twenty minutes, and Steve and Karmen were not sure their hearts could take much more. Soon enough they reached the field they were searching for, as Max managed to knock down a sign at the edge of the field. Karmen and Steve let out a sigh of relief, as the kids began to quickly exit the car.

"We are never, ever, doing that again!" Karmen exclaimed, as Steve nodded, still holding onto the edge of his seat.

He then stumbled out of the car, falling to his knees for a moment as he watched the kids gear up.

"Guys...Oh no, guys...stop" Steve stuttered, feeling dizzy as he clung onto the car for support.

He was about to grab Mike who was walking over to a large hole in the ground, when Karmen attempted to exit the car. She too almost fell out, but Steve caught her at the last moment, wrapping his arm around her waist. He then helped her stand upright, his hand never leaving her waist, as she leaned onto him.

"You okay?" Steve inquired, seeing the blood that was still dripping from her arm.

"Yeah, are you?" Karmen asked, as he nodded.

"Jesus, would you two just kiss already? We don't have time for this" Mike rolled his eyes, as he lowered a rope down the hole.

Steve and Karmen both instantly blushed a deep red, avoiding each

other's eyes. Neither knew what to say to the other, not wanting to ruin the friendship they had created.

"About what Billy said...well, uh...he just...and then you..." Karmen stuttered.

"Okay, enough is enough. You love him and he loves you. Say it" Dustin announced, standing in front of the pair.

"Dustin, we-" Steve began, but he cut her off.

"Say it!" Dustin insisted.

"Oh, what the hell?" Karmen mumbled, as she grabbed the collar of Steve's jacket and brought his lips crashing against hers.

Steve's eyes widened in shock for a moment, before he quickly began to respond to the kiss and lowered his hands to Karmen's hips. Karmen pulled Steve closer to her, as her own hands began to trail through his soft hair.

"Woah..." Max trailed off, as the car lights began to get so bright, she thought they might explode.

"So that's what sexual electricity is" Dustin realised, as he placed his goggles over his face.

By the time Steve and Karmen finally pulled apart, the kids had grabbed the cannisters of gasoline and had begun using a rope to climb down the hole.

"We should probably follow them" Karmen stated, her breath ghosting over Steve's lips.

"Yeah...I mean, yeah, definitely! Wait you, guys!" Steve shouted after them, as he and Karmen stumbled over to the hole.

"A member of our party is in danger-" Dustin started, but Karmen cut him off.

"This isn't a game, Dustin! You could get hurt. Think about what the demo-dogs did to Bob" Karmen pointed out.

"Look, we're going with or without you. I know you guys promised that you would keep us safe...so keep us safe" Dustin informed them, holding out a gasoline cannister to Karmen and the bat to Steve.

"This is such a bad idea" Karmen sighed, taking it from his hand.

They quickly suited up, placing bandana's over their faces so they wouldn't breathe in the toxic air and grabbed a flashlight. The hole led to a series of tunnels that they were hoping were marked down on the map Will had drawn up days ago, but they couldn't be sure. Steve almost fell down the hole, unable to keep a firm grip on the rope, but managed to stay upright. He then held his hands up to help Karmen lower herself down, as she dropped down, and he held her against his body.

"Let's get these little shits in line" Steve grinned at her.

"I'm pretty sure it's this way" Mike announced, a few metres ahead of them, a map in his hands.

"You're pretty sure or you're certain?" Dustin tried to clarify.

"I'm 100% sure, just follow me and you'll know" Mike retorted, about to start walking.

"Woah, woah. I don't think so" Steve called after him.

"What?" Mike questioned.

"If any of you kids die down here, we're getting the blame. Got it, dipshit?" Steve explained.

"Yeah, we're in charge. So, follow us and do exactly what we say" Karmen added, taking Steve's hand in hers, as they began to walk into the tunnel.

"I think I liked it better when they were in denial" Mike mumbled.

"You kissed me back there" Steve stated, as they made their way deeper into the tunnels.

"And you kissed me back" Karmen replied, with a small grin.

"So...are we like a couple now?" Steve inquired, indicating to their joined hands.

"Well seeing as I'm in love with you that seems like a good next step" Karmen mumbled, as Steve came to a halt.

"What?" Karmen frowned, as she could tell Steve was smiling underneath the bandana.

"You said you loved me" Steve repeated.

"I think you short circuited his brain" Max giggled.

"Do you really mean that? Don't say it if you don't-" Steve started, but she cut you off.

"Of course, I mean it! Why do you think I got so angry when you and Nancy kissed at Tina's party?" Karmen pointed out.

"I thought that was just because we didn't go together?" Steve questioned, surprised.

"You really are an idiot, Steve Harrington" Karmen shook her head, fondly, as they began walking again.

"I love you too, by the way" Steve informed, as Karmen's grin grew.

Before they could say anything else, an ear-splitting scream could be heard from behind them, as the pair realised Dustin was nowhere to be seen.

"Dustin!" Karmen shouted, as they rushed back a few paces.

"Shit! Some got in my mouth! Shit!" Dustin cried, from where he was sitting on the floor, his bandana taken away from his mouth.

"Are you okay?" Karmen questioned, crouching down next to him.

"What happened?" Steve asked, going to his other side.

Dustin continued to cough and splutter for a few more seconds,

before looking between the two, and smiling.

"I'm okay" He announced.

"Seriously, Dustin?" Karmen rolled her eyes.

"Very funny, man. Nice" Steve shook his head.

"Jesus, what an idiot" Max stated.

"Come on...you're going up in front, where we can keep an eye on you" Karmen informed him.

"They're literally like the mum and dad of the group" Lucas whispered, as Max giggled in response.

"Keep up you two, let's not have any more drama" Steve insisted, as the pair rushed up to them.

They soon came to a chamber which seemed to join all the tunnels up and found that the air was even more dense than the rest had been.

"All right, Wheeler, looks like we found your hub" Steve announced, shining the torch around.

"Let's drench it" Mike exclaimed, as the group all shared excited looks.

In no time they had poured gasoline over the entire chamber, knowing they needed to get to work as quickly as possible. They walked back towards the tunnel they had come from, and made sure they weren't too close, as Karmen and Steve crouched down.

"Okay, everyone ready?" Steve questioned.

"Yeah" Came numerous responses.

"Light her up" Dustin stated, as Steve took out a lighter from his jacket.

"I am in such deep shit" He sighed, as he went to flick the flame on.

However, it wouldn't seem to start. He tried it again and again, as

Mike began tapping his foot behind them, knowing Eleven would need their help, urgently.

"Don't worry, I've got this" Karmen told him, taking the lighter from his hand.

On the first go she was able to light the flame and threw it towards the middle of the chamber. Instantly, the entire hub caught fire, as the squealing from the roots could be heard.

"Perks of having a girlfriend" Steve smirked, as the flames rose higher.

"Let's go guys" Karmen grinned, as she ushered the kids along.

Author's Notes: They finally kissed, after like 26 chapters, haha. Sorry if this chapter feels a little disjointed but I'm on placement at the moment which means I'm getting next to no sleep. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: Billy definitely gave them that final nudge, and he'll be kicking himself for it. Thanks for the review:)

tazsgirl6969: Here's the new chapter, enjoy:)

partlydjh: Thanks for the review, hope you like this chapter:) Sorry I'm not in that fandom!

28. To Be Continued

They ran through the tunnels as quickly as their legs could carry them, following close behind Steve, who was holding the map. Karmen came to a halt when she heard shouting from the back of the group and turned to see Mike had been caught by one of the tree roots. She rushed forward, about to use her powers, but Steve was already ahead of her. He swung his bat down onto the root numerous times, as it broke apart from his hard swings.

"Damn" Karmen mumbled, raising an eyebrow at a smug Steve.

Suddenly they heard an animalistic growl from behind them and whipped around to see Dart staring at them.

"I've got this one" Karmen said, taking a step forward.

"No! Wait!" Dustin exclaimed, as he pulled her back.

"What are you doing?" Mike questioned, as Dustin slowly started approaching the creature.

"Dustin, stop!" Steve insisted, but the younger boy wouldn't listen.

"Trust me...please" Dustin replied, as Karmen reluctantly let him go forward.

"Hey, it's me. It's me. It's just your friend, it's Dustin. You remember me?" He smiled at the creature, taking off his bandana.

"Be careful!" Karmen hissed, as Dustin crouched down in front of the creature.

"Will you let us pass?" Dustin asked, as the demo-dog showed it's large rows of teeth and howled at him.

"Okay, okay. I'm sorry about the storm cellar. That was a pretty douchey thing to do. You hungry? Yeah?" Dustin questioned, as the demo-dog stepped closer.

"He's insane" Lucas whispered.

"Shut up" Karmen and Steve scolded, at the same time.

"I've got our favourite. See? Nougat! Look, tasty right? Eat up buddy" Dustin encouraged, as he took a candy bar out of his bag and placed it on the ground in front of him.

"Come on" Dustin mumbled, as he made a gesture for them all to go past.

Cautiously, the group stumbled past the creature, trying to stay as far away from it as possible. Dustin then, slowly stood up and walked around the creature, giving it one last look. The demo-dog looked around quickly, before going back to eating its food.

"Goodbye buddy" Dustin sighed, sadly, as he followed the others.

"Dustin the Demo-Dog whisperer" Karmen grinned, as she patted him on the shoulder.

They hadn't got far before they heard the howls of the other demo-dogs approaching them, as they set off in a run. Steve and Karmen made sure to push the kids up the rope first, as they were their priority. They had just pushed Dustin up to the surface when they saw the creatures rushing towards them.

"Oh shit" Karmen mumbled, as she looked away, scrunching her eyes shut.

Steve pulled Karmen close to him, his arm going around her waist. He dropped his head down to her shoulder, his eyes shut too. When no attack came, the pair opened their eyes. They were surprised to see the creatures were running past them, barely even registering they were there.

"Eleven" They heard Mike exclaim above their heads, as they all realised who their new target was.

Once they were all back to the safety of the car, the lights suddenly burst into life, blinding the group. After a few minutes, they slowly began to dim again.

"Do you think she closed it?" Steve questioned.

"Yeah. Yeah, I do" Karmen smiled, proudly.

A couple months later, and things were finally getting back to normal. Will was doing better, and Eleven was back. Jonathan and Nancy were back together, and seemed to have taken Steve and Karmen's relationship well. There was still a certain amount of distrust between the group, as it was a messy situation. Nancy and Karmen were back to being somewhat reluctant friends, but it was a start. Things were getting better. However, Karmen couldn't stop the nagging feeling in her gut. She still felt like it was just the beginning of something. She tried to rid her mind of those thoughts on the night of the Snow Ball, wanting the kids to have the best night possible.

"Oh my God...you're actually turning him into a mini you" Karmen gasped, as she looked at Dustin's hair.

"He looks great" Steve insisted, making Karmen giggle.

"Knock em, kid" Karmen told him, ushering the nervous boy towards the sports hall.

"I think Dustin's been seeing more of you recently than I have" Karmen stated, as she leaned against his car.

"Are you jealous?" Steve asked, as he placed a hand on the car, so their faces were only inches apart.

"Definitely" Karmen smiled, as she pulled him closer, and pressed her lips against his.

Karmen wasn't sure how long the kiss had lasted, as suddenly Hopper and Eleven were standing beside them, the older man clearing his throat to get their attention.

"El! You look so pretty" Karmen exclaimed, noticing the cute dress Eleven had on.

"Do you think Mike will like it?" Eleven asked, looking down at herself.

"Of course, he will. And if he doesn't, he needs his eyes tested" Karmen insisted.

"Go on, he'll be waiting" Hopper stated, as he ushered her inside, before wandering off to find Joyce.

"I still can't believe she's here. I thought she was dead for all that time..." Karmen trailed off.

"But she's not. And neither are we. Everything's going to be good now" Steve told her, taking her hand in his own.

"Until you leave for university" Karmen sighed.

"Well we call it College here-" Steve started, as Karmen hit his shoulder.

"Asshole" Karmen giggled.

"Hmm, but I'm your asshole" Steve replied, as Karmen laughed harder.

She was about to reply when she noticed Dustin rushing through the doors of the hall, tears covering his face.

"Dustin? What happened?" Karmen frowned, as they rushed over to him.

"No one...no one would dance with me" Dustin mumbled, wiping away his tears.

"Oh Dustin. Come here" Karmen sighed, as she hugged the younger boy.

Steve then brought his arms around the pair, resulting in a group hug, as Dustin tried to stop crying.

"Forget about them, man. Clearly they don't know a good thing when they see it" Steve pointed out.

A group of girls in Dustin's year then began piling out of the hall, most likely wanting to get some fresh air. One of them, with ginger

hair, started sniggering when she saw the tears on Dustin's face, who turned around in shame. Karmen glared at the girl with anger, as Steve noticed the light above the group began shine. It got brighter and brighter until Steve was sure it would burst. From where the girl was standing, he knew that she would get hurt if the glass was to fall on her and reached out to touch Karmen's arm.

"Hey" He stated, indicating to the dangerously bright light.

This seemed to knock Karmen out of a daze, as she looked away, a guilty look on her face. The girls from the group frowned at each other, confused as to what had just happened, but clearly didn't suspect Karmen.

"You should back in-" Karmen started, but he cut her off.

"No, I can't!" Dustin cried.

"How about if Steve goes with you?" Karmen suggested.

"Really?" Dustin questioned, looking at him.

"Yeah. See how much of my 'King Steve' cred I have left" Steve went on, as Karmen shook her head, fondly.

"Okay, let's go!" Dustin grinned, as he began pulling Steve along.

"You coming?" Steve called out to her.

"Yeah, in a minute. I'm just going to talk to Hopper first" Karmen told him, as Steve was dragged into the hall.

The moment they were out of sight, Karmen couldn't keep the pained expression off her face any longer. She hadn't meant to use her powers on the light above the girls, she hadn't even realised what she was doing until Steve had pointed it out. But ever since she felt the power pulsing inside her. Karmen looked down to her hands and saw the blue electricity fizzling over her palms, looking like it was ready to erupt any moment.

"How long do you think you can keep this up?" A voice boomed from beside her, as she whipped her head around to see who it was.

"Billy? What the hell are you doing here?" Karmen frowned, as he took a cautious step closer.

The shock of seeing him, seemed to have stopped the dangerous electricity from erupting from her hands. If only momentarily.

"I could ask you the same question. A school dance is no place for someone like you" Billy retorted.

"Or a violent racist like you" Karmen stated, as Billy scoffed.

"You think your so much better than me, don't you?" Billy went on.

"I don't go around throwing kids into walls" Karmen snapped.

"At least I know what am. What are you, Karmen?" Billy questioned.

"Look, I don't have time for your shit tonight, Billy" Karmen stated, as she began to walk past him.

"How long until you hurt one of those kids? Or your precious boyfriend?" Billy suggested, as Karmen came to a halt.

"I would never hurt them!" Karmen exclaimed, angrily.

"Maybe. But I think soon enough, you'll see that we're not so different" Billy told her, before turning away.

Karmen frowned as she watched him walk off into the night and could only hope what he said wasn't true. She knew she needed to get a better hold on her powers, but she didn't know how.

"Hey, there's a slow dance about to begin with our names on it!" Steve called over to her, opening the hall doors, clearly not having seen her interaction with Billy.

"Sounds perfect" Karmen smiled, as she began to follow him.

Author's Notes: **This story will be returning with Season 3 once it airs!** I hope you all enjoyed this chapter:) I plan to start writing this story again around August/September time, but I will keep you guys

updated once the show comes back. I really hope Season 3 lives up to the two previous seasons, and we get lots of Steve, haha. Please leave a review:)

Micky-Moo: I'm glad you've enjoyed this story so much, and hope that you'll come back to it once Season 3 airs:) I think as long as things are going well with Jonathan, Nancy won't pay too much attention to Steve's relationships. But if they break up again...it could mean trouble.

partlydjh: Aw, thank you! Glad you liked it:)

29. Summer Lovin'

A/N: This story is officially off hiatus! And a lot sooner than expected. Season 3 broke my heart, so I need to start writing again ASAP. Season 3 spoilers below!

Karmen's summer hadn't gone quite the way she was expecting. If someone had told her the year before that she would be making out with her boyfriend, Steve Harrington, in the Scoops Ahoy storeroom, she would have never believed them. Yet there she was, her back pressed against one of the cabinets, as Steve pressed soft kisses down her neck. She giggled lightly as his Scoops Ahoy hat brushed against her nose, as she reached up and flung it across the room.

"Hey, that's company property" Steve mumbled, against her neck.

"Well let me make it up to you" Karmen grinned, as pulled him up by his collar and pressed her lips against his.

Just as Steve's hands were trailing under her shirt, the door to the storeroom suddenly swung open, revealing an annoyed looking Robin, Steve's co-worker.

"Hey Dingus, stop sharing spit with your girlfriend and actually do your job!" Robin exclaimed, as she picked Steve's hat off the floor and threw it at his chest.

"Five minutes" Steve replied, placing his hat back over his hair, much to Karmen's disappointment.

"One minute or I'll drag you out myself" Robin insisted, as she slammed the door shut.

"She enjoys doing that, you know" Karmen rolled her eyes, slinging her arms around Steve's shoulders.

"She's just annoyed that she has to be around a couple as awesome as us when she's still single" Steve shrugged, his lips brushing against hers again.

Karmen simply hummed dismissively in response, pressing a quick kiss to his lips before untangling their limbs.

"I need to be getting to work anyway. I can't be late again, or they'll sack me" She told him.

"Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing" Steve suggested.

"Steve, I know you don't like me working there but we need money, okay? Since your dad has cut you off, we need anything we can get" Karmen explained.

"You're right as always" Steve sighed, looking down.

"Hey, it'll be alright. Before we know it, we'll have saved up enough for us to get our own place" Karmen insisted, touching Steve's face lightly to get him to look at her.

"Waking up to you every day sounds pretty perfect" Steve smiled, as Karmen returned the expression.

"I can't wait" Karmen grinned, as they leaned in to kiss and met in the middle.

"Dustin's coming back from camp today. The kids have some surprise planned for him; they were forcing me to paint a banner most of last night" Karmen informed him.

"It'll be good to have the little guy back" Steve grinned.

"Claudia was crying most of yesterday because she was so excited about him coming back" Karmen giggled.

"I know you might be living with them, but it still sounds weird you calling Dustin's mum by her first name" Steve stated.

"At least she doesn't want me to call her mum" Karmen laughed.

"And you're sure you're still happy staying there? I can try to convince my mum to let you stay-" Steve started but she cut him off.

"No, don't do that. Remember what happened last time?" Karmen

sighed, looking at the small scar on Steve's face that happened when his dad heard about her wanting to move in.

"How could I forget" Steve mumbled, his hand unconsciously touching the small scar near his hairline.

Ever since Steve hadn't got into college things had gone from bad to worse at home for him. Whereas before Steve's father didn't pay him much attention, the man seemed to see Steve as a big disappointment now which made him angry. Very angry. The reason that she was working so many hours at work over the summer was so she could get him out of that house as quickly as possible. She would happily give all of her money so he could get a place of his own, even if that meant she had to stay at the Henderson's. She couldn't stand the thought of him getting hurt.

"Dingus, come on!" Robin shouted from outside the door, as Karmen wondered if she had been listening the whole time.

"Alright, I'm coming!" Steve shouted, as he began pressing quick kisses to Karmen's lips.

"Will you come around after work?" Steve asked.

"Where else would I want to be?" Karmen grinned, as Steve's face lit up.

"Finally!" Robin rolled her eyes, when they exited the storeroom.

Karmen pushed herself up from the edge of the pool, happy that her work was over for the morning. She had become a swimming instructor at the beginning of the summer for the local kids. It wasn't great pay, but it was better than nothing. Pushing her money worries out of her head, she made her way to the locker room, ready for her lunch. A moment later there was a loud whistle from behind her. She turned around, coming face to face with the reason why Steve hated her working at the pool.

"Billy" Karmen mumbled, raising an eyebrow, at the whistle that was still pressed against his lips.

"Health and safety hazard. You're far too hot to be on the premises" Billy flirted, as he approached her.

"That was a pretty weak one. Why don't you try it on Mrs Wheeler instead? I think she'd be more appreciative" Karmen told him.

"Is that a hint of jealousy I hear?" Billy asked, coming to stand a few inches from her.

"Is it actually possible to have a conversation with you that doesn't include flirting?" Karmen questioned, as she turned to walk away.

"Probably not" Billy shrugged, as he followed her into the locker room.

"Max said she's going to need a lift home tonight, by the way," Karmen informed him, as she opened her locker.

"And she couldn't tell me herself?" Billy said, in an exasperated tone.

"That's what I'm here for. I'm the kid whisperer" Karmen smiled at her own joke, as she pulled out her lunch box which is almost full to the brim.

"I don't know how you can stand to be around those little shits so much" Billy stated, pulling out a brown bag which Karmen guessed was his lunch.

"Maybe if you tried being a bit nicer to them, you'd actually get along" Karmen retorted, as they exited the room.

"I highly doubt that" Billy exclaimed, as they went to sit by the pool edge together to eat their lunch.

Karmen noticed as Billy sighed when he opened the bag to find only an apple inside. All the money he earned either went to the maintenance of his car or to his father these days. Which meant he didn't have enough money to buy his own food, so he only had what his stepmother gave him.

"Here," Karmen said, throwing her sandwich on his lap.

"I don't need your charity, Dixon" Billy grumbled, about to throw it back to her.

"What charity? I'm just trying to maintain my figure here. Mrs Henderson packs me enough lunch for like five people" Karmen explained.

"Well, I wouldn't want you to lose your gorgeous figure" Billy grinned, as he took a bite of the sandwich.

"And he's back" Karmen laughed, shaking her head.

Karmen and Billy had formed an odd sort of friendship in the past couple of months. At the start of the summer, he had even apologised to Steve and the kids about what had happened the year prior. This apology may have consisted of 'Sorry you let me beat the shit out of you, Harrington' but it was a start. Karmen still wasn't convinced about being civil with him, remembering the bruises on Steve's face that took weeks to heal. It was only when Max began to plead his case that she listened. If Karmen thought Steve's father was bad, then Billy's was a whole different ball game. A few weeks before Billy had worn a shirt for a few shifts, which Karmen found very out of character. It was only when they were getting changed in the locker rooms a couple of days later, she noticed the purple bruises lining the whole of the boy's side. Billy was one screwed up individual who had never been given a chance. Karmen was willing to give him this chance, much to Steve's disapproval. It was completely understandable, Karmen and Billy did have history and the boy would constantly flirt with her. But Steve trusted her, just like she trusted him. Not that it stopped her from worrying when he would finish his shifts late, laughing about how 'damn funny' Robin was.

"So, has the weirdo made her move on Harrington yet?" Billy questioned, never failing to stir the pot where he could.

"What...how did you know I was thinking about her?" Karmen inquired.

"Whenever you're thinking about her you get this angry look on your face, and your nose wrinkles up," Billy told her, pointing to where he was talking about on her nose.

"No, she hasn't. Not that it would matter anyway because Steve would push her away" Karmen insisted, brushing Billy's hand away from her face.

"I wouldn't be so sure. I don't think you could a much more romantic setting than Scoops Ahoy" Billy teased, as Karmen burst out laughing.

Billy began laughing too, a genuine rare smile on his face. He realised it only seemed to happen when he was around Karmen.

"Hey, British Lady! I got a message for you!" A young girl came strolling over to them.

"It's Karmen...but whatever. What's the message, Erica?" She asked, expecting it was from Lucas.

"The Dork at Scoops Ahoy asked me to give you this. I get free ice cream for a week now" Erica smirked, handing her a piece of paper before running off back to her friends.

Karmen unfurled the note as she realised it was from Steve, but before she could read it Billy had grabbed it from her hands.

"To my girl...wow, he's whipped. 'I just wanted to say I hope you have a great day at work, and I miss you already. Remember to wear sunscreen. I'll see you tonight. Love you more than anything, Steve'. Okay, I need to go throw up" Billy read aloud, grimacing as he went on.

"Pft, your just jealous you don't have anyone writing you cute notes" Karmen grinned, grabbing the note out of his hand.

Karmen watched as Billy got a mischievous look in his eye, and suddenly his hand was on the small of her back and she was being pushed into the water. She came spluttering to the surface, with an annoyed gasp.

"You asshole!" She cried, splashing him, laughing as she did so.

"Enjoy the rest of your shift" Billy chuckled.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! So I needed this first chapter to be cute and fluffy after watching the latest season. I literally bawled my eyes out for a good couple of hours. Karmen's going to have a very interesting storyline this season, which you can probably see me starting to line up. She's still very much in love with Steve, I just thought I would point out. Please leave a review:)

teenwolfismylife101: Well, it's back! I hope you like this new chapter:)

Micky-Moo: Thanks for your last review:) I think Karmen will be worrying more about Robin than Nancy...but does she need to? I hope you like this chapter!

tazsgirl6969: Thank you! Here's the new update:)

30. Not On My Watch

Karmen groaned as she looked down at her usually straight hair, which was currently a mess of curls after she was pushed into the pool. She glared at Billy, who was sitting on the lifeguard's chair, and gave her a wink when he saw her looking. It was only a few more minutes until the end of her shift, meaning she could quickly make her way to the Henderson's and dry her hair before meeting Steve when he finished work. Just as she was getting the kids to do their last lap of the pool, she spotted a familiar young boy approaching her, looking very out of place.

"Byers! Hey, what are you doing here?" She called over to Will, who gave her a small smile.

"I've got nowhere else to be" Will shrugged, his hands in his pockets.

"Oh God, teen drama is occurring isn't it?" Karmen guessed.

"You know your still a teenager too, right?" Will retorted.

"Don't remind me" Karmen sighed, as she blew her whistle.

"Alright, guys! That's enough for the day, everyone out of the pool" Karmen exclaimed, as the kids excitedly began to hop out.

"Let's go to my office, young Byers" Karmen announced, as she made her way over to two unused pool chairs.

"So, spill it. What's wrong?" Karmen insisted as she sat down.

"It's nothing" Will mumbled, looking miserable.

"Well your face says otherwise. C'mon, I thought you'd be happy today, Dustin's back, isn't he?" Karmen suggested.

"Yeah, and it is good to have him back, really good..." Will trailed off.

"But?" Karmen frowned.

"It just...doesn't feel the way it used to" Will confessed.

"Well a lot has happened to all us in the past couple years" Karmen pointed out.

"I know but all anyone ever wants to talk about is girls! And I get that everyone has their girlfriend now, even Dustin but-" Will started, but Karmen cut him off.

"Woah, woah. Back up. Dustin has a girlfriend?!" Karmen cried, her eyes wide.

"He says he does but Lucas doesn't think she exists" Will explained.

"Oh Jesus, am I going to have to have a birds and the bees talk with him? Wait, is that what you want to talk about? Because Steve is probably-" Karmen went on, but Will stopped her.

"No! No. Definitely not" Will cringed at the thought.

"Good...So, you're feeling left out then?" Karmen theorised.

"Yeah, I guess" Will nodded.

"Maybe you should tell them that" Karmen stated.

"Fat chance, the only time I ever see Mike is with Eleven wrapped around him" Mike exclaimed, bitterly.

"At least you didn't have to live with them for a month. Seriously disgusting" Karmen grimaced.

"Is that why you moved out of Hopper's?" Will guessed.

"...No. Hopper wasn't exactly pleased when he found Steve had snuck into my room one night and basically banned him from the cabin. And my life. And Hawkins in general. I think he tried to run him over with his car last week actually...but I'm getting off point here" Karmen ranted, shaking her head.

"It's like Mike's not even the same person anymore" Will mumbled.

"He's in love. Love makes you crazy" Karmen suggested, as Will laughed bitterly.

"Yeah, tell me about it," Will said so quietly, it was almost a whisper.

"You know, when Nancy and Steve got together at the Halloween Party last year, I felt so...pushed out. Like I had put all my time and effort into Steve and he just didn't care. It was always going to be Nancy for him, and...I couldn't bear seeing them together" Karmen told him.

"What did you do?" Will frowned, as Karmen looked over to Billy, remembering their kiss.

"Nothing good," She said, with a small laugh.

"The point is, we all get jealous sometimes. Even someone as awesome as me" Karmen exclaimed.

"Yeah, but you liked Steve. That's why you were jealous" Will pointed out.

"...Maybe it's not that different" Karmen suggested, as she saw Will tense.

"It's completely different" Will shook his head.

"Mike's always been there for you, he's your best friend. It's not too farfetched to say some feelings might have developed" Karmen explained.

"I'm not like that" Will shook his head, vehemently.

"Okay, that's cool" Karmen shrugged.

"...It would be wrong" Will stated.

"Says who?" Karmen questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"My dad. He used to...call me things" Will admitted.

"Well, no offence, Will. But your dad is a deadbeat with a capital D" Karmen told him, earning a small chuckle from Will.

"Look, I don't know how you feel, and you're so young that you

probably don't know how you feel either but whatever you are or aren't feeling is fine to feel" Karmen went on, as Will frowned with confusion.

"I have no idea what you just said" Will informed her, laughing lightly.

"Will, if you want a girlfriend, then that's good and if you wanted something else then that's good too" Karmen explained.

"But boys are supposed to want girlfriends, right?" Will suggested.

"No one is supposed to feel any certain way and if anyone tells you how you feel is wrong, send them my way" She informed him.

"Thanks, Karmen. I actually do feel better" Will smiled, as she ruffled his hair.

"Maybe I should be a counsellor, it would definitely be better pay. And I wouldn't...oh no, not on my watch" Karmen said, suddenly standing upright as Will looked over to what she was staring at.

Mrs Wheeler was standing only a few inches away from Billy, a seductive smile on her face, as the younger boy passed her a towel. Karmen stormed over to them, an angry look in her eyes. She had seen the way Mrs Wheeler and the rest of the mums at the pool had been looking at Billy all summer, and it seemed like she had finally decided to make a move. Or at least let Billy make his.

"I, uh...I didn't think you taught adults" Mrs Wheeler stated, as Karmen caught on to the end of their conversation.

"Seeing as he's not the swimming instructor at the pool...he doesn't" Karmen pointed out, coming to stand at Billy's side.

"They're private lessons" Billy informed her, with his trademark grin.

"Well, I doubt Mrs Wheeler has time for swimming lessons. She's already so busy looking after her kids...and husband" Karmen went on, raising an eyebrow at Mrs Wheeler.

"Uh, you're right...I don't need any lessons. Sorry, Billy" Mrs Wheeler

mumbled as she saw Will approaching them.

She made a hasty exit, embarrassment clear on her face, as Karmen watched her go before turning to Billy.

"Really, Billy? Going after middle-aged mothers?" Karmen rolled her eyes.

"Why are you so interested?" Billy questioned, with a smirk.

"She's too old for you" Karmen stated.

"So, you think I should be going after someone more my age. Maybe someone in my grade?" Billy suggested, taking a step forward so their faces were very close.

"Don't start. I'm already pissed at you for ruining my hair" Karmen told him, resisting the urge to take a step back.

"Oh, I don't know...I think you look good wet..." Billy trailed off, pushing some of Karmen's wet hair behind her ear, as she blushed furiously.

She brushed his hand away, remembering that Will was only a metre away, and any encounter with Billy was not appropriate for kids.

"Honestly, it's been giving me a really **hard** time-" Billy started, but Karmen quickly placed her hand over his mouth to stop him from saying any more.

"Will, do you mind taking the kids stuff out of the pool while I have a talk with Billy here?" Karmen questioned, not taking her eyes off Billy.

"Uh...sure" Will nodded, before backing away, as Karmen took her hand away from Billy's mouth.

"Are you going to punish me?" Billy asked, looking very smug.

"Jesus, Billy. Would you give it a break? What are you even doing?" Karmen insisted, a blush still on her face.

"Okay, okay. I'm sorry...it's just funny seeing you get all worked up" Billy laughed, lightly.

Karmen gave him a sarcastic laugh in return, as she spotted a young boy in the pool using a bucket to throw water over who Karmen expected was his brother. With a grin, she leaned down and grabbed the bucket from the boy's arms, which was full to the brim and threw it over Billy, who held his hands up in shock. Karmen burst into a fit of giggles, as Billy wiped some of the water out of his eyes.

"Now that...is funny" Karmen laughed, as Billy pushed his wet hair from his face.

Billy rolled his eyes but couldn't stop the smile that spread across his face. Karmen gave the bucket back to the boy with quick thanks, spotting Will on the other side of the pool, who also seemed to have thought it was funny from the way he was laughing.

"Well, the good news is you didn't rub off Mrs Wheelers landline number" Billy announced, looking at the ink on his hand.

"She gave you her number?" Karmen scoffed.

"Of course, how else will I be able to find out if she was coming to her private lesson tonight?" Billy shrugged, with a grin.

"She's forty, Billy! She's old enough to be your mum, for God's sake" Karmen insisted.

"Maybe if I had a better offer..." Billy trailed off.

"I'm not going on a date with you. I have a boyfriend! You beat him up last year, remember?" Karmen pointed out, as guilt washed over Billy's face for just a moment.

"I never said anything about a date. Just stay after work with me. C'mon, I'll steal the keys to that ice-cream van out front?" Billy suggested, trying to literally sweeten the deal.

"I'm supposed to be meeting Steve" Karmen retorted, knowing she would miss Steve even if it was just for one night.

"You see him every night. C'mon, Karmen. I promise, no flirting. At least tonight" Billy told her.

Karmen knew Billy wasn't bluffing and she knew that nothing good would come out of Mrs Wheeler and Billy hooking up. Steve would understandably be upset if she just didn't turn up, but when Karmen spotted Erica still at the pool, she put a plan in motion. She would find a way to make it up to Steve.

"Alright" Karmen shrugged, as Billy smirked.

"Obviously Will's going to be staying too...not that that's a problem, right?" Karmen replied, with a smug look.

"The more the merrier" Billy mumbled, with a forced smile.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Steve will be back next chapter, don't worry. Billy's working overtime to get closer to Karmen in this chapter, and we'll soon learn just how deep his feelings go. Please leave a review:)

RoseAmeliaSarahNoblePond: I binged Stranger Things too in about 48 hours, haha. Billy definitely deserves a friend, but hopefully, he won't push Karmen away. Karmen's going to have a really big part to play in this season, so I think it should be good. Thanks for the review:)

Micky-Moo: Thank you:) I'm glad you're still enjoying the story!

Guest: Aw, I'm glad you liked it! This chapter their interaction got a bit more steamy, haha.

19vanelkc: Thank you so much:) It really helps motivate me to here people are loving this story:)

31. The Calm Before the Storm

"Admit it...you've had a good night" Billy announced, nudging her lightly with his shoulder.

They were currently sitting on top of the ice cream van after Billy's suggestion of heading up there, and Will's excitement at the idea. Karmen looked to her right and saw Will with a large smile on his face, eating the ice cream that Billy had stolen for them. They had lounged around the pool for a bit until Billy had come out of the supply cupboard with a grin on his face, and three surfboards in his arms. Trying to surf in the still waters of a community pool went about as well as expected, but they had all had fun. Billy had even been nice to Will, and apart from one crude comment as he watched Karmen climb on to the van's roof, he hadn't flirted.

"I never said I wouldn't" Karmen shook her head, fondly.

The sun had just set, and even though it was a summer's night, there was still a chill in the air. Even though their stolen ice creams tasted great, they would all be starting to shiver soon enough.

"You guys wanna' see something cool?" Karmen questioned, as Will nodded excitedly.

"Sure" Billy smiled, feeling an unusual sense of happiness.

Carefully, she pushed herself into a standing position, as the boys both looked up to her. Taking a look around the abandoned car park, she then raised her hand out. A familiar blue orb began to grow on her palm, as she slowly made a fist and the orb began to flicker into numerous beams of blue light. Suddenly, she opened her palm as the beams flew across the car park towards the dim streetlights. Instantly, the colour of the lamps changed into a bright blue which illuminated the group and the surrounding area.

"Wow..." Billy trailed off, amazement in his voice.

"Still think I'm a freak?" Karmen questioned, as she slowly dimmed the lights again.

"What I said last winter...I don't know, I was just scared. I didn't mean it. I know you'd never hurt anyone. You're...good" Billy explained, as Karmen sat back down.

"Thanks" Karmen smiled at him, feeling like she needed to hear those words.

"That was awesome!" Will exclaimed, from beside her.

"I'm glad you've cheered up" Karmen stated, ruffling his hair.

"You're more fun to hang out with than Mike at the moment" Will shrugged, finishing the last bit of his ice cream.

"You're only just figuring this out?" Karmen giggled.

"Hey Billy, can I have another ice cream?" Will questioned, looking over to the older boy.

"Knock yourself out, kid" Billy exclaimed, throwing the keys his way.

With a grin, Will jumped up and began crawling down the side of the van, as Karmen suspected he was high on a sugar rush.

"You know if you were more like this with Max, you two would actually get along really well" Karmen stated.

"Things are at least civil between me and Maxine right now, let's not push it" Billy scoffed.

"How are things at home?" Karmen inquired, as Billy shrugged.

"Fine" He mumbled, his gaze not reaching her eyes.

Billy jumped slightly when Karmen raised her hand and pushed some of his dirty blond hair away from his face. He felt an odd nervousness as she kept her hand there, her fingers brushing against his cheek.

"Your bruise is starting to show" Karmen pointed out, her fingers touching the purple skin that had been hidden by his hair.

"Oh," Billy choked out.

He hoped she wouldn't take her hand away. No one else touched him with gentle hands and warm smiles. They were either scared of him or hated him. Sometimes both. But not Karmen. Not that she touched him a whole lot. Or at least as much as he wished she would.

"Maybe I could have a word with him?" Karmen suggested, pulling back.

"No! No...I don't want you anywhere near him" Billy explained.

"Well, I don't want him anywhere near you either...or Max!" Karmen pointed out.

"He won't touch her. I wouldn't let him" Billy shook his head.

"Throwing yourself in front of her isn't a solution" Karmen insisted.

"Next year I'll be able to move out. I can take Max too...not that she'd probably come or..." Billy trailed off.

"What?" Karmen frowned.

"Maybe you could take her" Billy suggested.

"You know for someone who you supposedly despise, you seem to care an awful lot about her" Karmen said, raising her eyebrow.

"I wouldn't want my worst enemy stuck in a house with my dad. Even little shits like Max" Billy stated.

"Whatever happens next year, Max won't be left with him. That I can promise you" Karmen replied, placing her hand over his and squeezing lightly.

Billy's eyes snapped up to meet hers, as he felt something warm spreading across his chest. His heart began beating fast, as he thought for a moment about leaning forward. Only a few more inches forward and his lips could be against hers. As his eyes dropped to her lips, she pulled her hand away, bringing Billy out of his trance.

"Not that I know what I'll be doing next year. I'm basically homeless, you know" Karmen laughed, not knowing what Billy had been

thinking.

"I thought you'd be moving in with Ex-King Steve" Billy suggested, as Karmen rolled her eyes at the nickname.

"He'll be moving out that's for sure. I just don't know if we'll have enough money to get a place together" Karmen admitted.

"What, and you stay at the Henderson's? How is that fair?" Billy frowned.

"Okay, promise me you won't repeat a word I'm about to say?" Karmen asked as Billy nodded.

"You're not the only guy in town who has an asshole dad. I mean, he's not as bad as yours. But he's hit him before, and things aren't getting better...they're getting worse" Karmen explained, as Billy's eyes widened.

"Shit...I always thought that Harrington's life was...well, perfect" Billy confessed.

"Hey, maybe you guys should move in together? Sons united against their dick fathers" Karmen joked, with a laugh.

"I'd rather stick a fork in my eye, sweetheart" Billy pointed out, as Karmen laughed harder.

Their attention was drawn to a car that was driving down the quiet road and seemed to be turning into the car park. Billy watched as Karmen's face lit up when she realised it was Steve's car. Instantly, she was crawling down the van's side, as the car stopped nearby. Her grin got even bigger when a surprise guest jumped out of the car.

"Dustin!" She exclaimed as the curly-haired boy rushed towards her.

She almost fell over from the impact of the teenager attack hugging her, as she realised something with an appropriate amount of horror on her face.

"Oh my God, have you had another growth spurt?" She accused, realising he was now as tall as her.

"It's not my fault that you're a midget" He mocked, as she slapped his arm.

"Oi! Watch it, or I'll be telling Claudia" She threatened, jokingly.

"Have I mentioned how weird it is that she's calling your mum by her first name?" Steve exclaimed, slinging his arm around Dustin's shoulder.

"A few times" Both Dustin and Karmen stated, rolling their eyes.

"Wow, you're really becoming a little...us, aren't you?" Steve realised, with a grin, as he looked at Karmen.

"God help him" She smiled.

Her smile instantly dropped as she saw someone else getting out of the front seat of Steve's car.

"Robin...hey" Karmen announced, as the girl waved at her.

"Oh yeah, I'm giving Robin a lift home. But I couldn't forget about my girl, could I?" Steve explained, as he leaned forward and pressed a quick kiss to her lips.

"Sorry about not meeting you earlier, did you get the message that I gave to Erica?" Karmen inquired, as he nodded, his arm wrapping around her waist.

"That girl is going to be a lot of trouble when she's older" Steve suggested, making Karmen giggle.

"Will? What are you doing here?" Dustin frowned when he noticed his friend stepping out of the ice cream van.

"Uh..." Will stuttered, not sure what to say.

"He heard that we were going to be raiding the ice cream van and stuck around" Karmen shrugged.

"We?" Steve questioned, as he noticed Billy climbing down from the van roof.

"Harrington" Billy nodded in Steve's direction.

"Hargrove" Steve mumbled, an annoyed tone to his voice.

"A lot of testosterone around here..." Robin trailed off.

Billy's eyes looked over how Steve's arm was wrapped around Karmen's waist and seemed to get tighter when he approached. All eyes were suddenly on Billy, as he realised, he was the odd one out.

"See you at work tomorrow" Billy murmured, before turning around and walking away.

"Give me a minute, yeah?" Karmen asked as she pulled away from Steve's embrace.

Steve nodded, as Karmen quickly rushed over to Billy who had already climbed into the driver's seat of his car. Karmen tapped on the window lightly, as Billy slowly wound down the window.

"You don't have to go, you know...maybe we could all hang out?" Karmen suggested.

"No thanks," Billy replied, as he went to wind the window back up.

"Promise me you're not going to meet up with Mrs Wheeler" Karmen exclaimed.

"Yeah, yeah" Billy dismissed, but Karmen wasn't convinced.

She reached into the car and grabbed Billy's hand, and began trying to rub out Karen's number, making Billy laugh at the ridiculousness of her actions.

"Okay, okay. I promise" He chuckled, as she gave him his hand back.

"See you tomorrow, Billy" She smiled.

"Try not to be late" He teased, turning the engine to his car on.

Karmen then turned on her heel, rushing back over to the group who had begun bundling into Steve's car. Robin looked less than happy to

be shoved in the back with Dustin and Will. As Karmen approached her boyfriend, he pulled her into a hug, as if it hadn't been only a minute since he last saw her. Steve seemed to feel that her skin was cold, as the next moment he was pulling off his jacket and pulling it around her shoulders, as she looked up to him, an adoring look in his eyes. With a sigh, Billy pressed on the accelerator pedal, not wanting to see anymore.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Big thanks for all the reviews last chapter. God, I just love all these characters so much. Including Robin by the way. Things might not be great with her and Karmen but they'll definitely work out their differences! I hope I'm not making Billy seem OOC, I just think if someone had shown love towards him he would have acted differently. Please leave a review:)

shadowxofxdarkness: Thank you:) I hope you like this chapter too!

Amadeusblack: Thanks for the review! I'm really glad you're enjoying this story. Don't worry, Karmen would never cheat.

RoseAmeliaSarahNoblePond: You almost got it right, the Mind Flayer is coming next chapter, haha. Things are definitely going to go differently due to Karmen's influence, but the Mind Flayer will get their host, that's for sure. I had been hoping someone would counsel Will this season, but as no one did, I felt Karmen needed to. Karmen and Billy's relationship is complex already, but it's going to get a lot more complicated soon. Please leave a review:)

NicoleR85: Aw, thank you! It means a lot to me:) I hope you like this chapter.

redorlem1: I totally get how you were feeling, haha. I hope you like this chapter:)

IsabellaAnne-Rogers: Thank you:) We'll have to wait and see. I've always been Team Steve too, but Season 3 has definitely made it harder to choose.

Arthas: I usually update every 2 weeks-ish, depending on how my life is going, haha.

1Demoness: Aw, thank you! I'll keep that in mind, there are lots of Billy scenes coming:)

teenwolfismylife101: I'm really glad you're enjoying it! It's going to be interesting seeing how it develops.

32. What Happened That Night?

Karmen shot up in her bed, her heart beating rapidly. She scrunched her eyes shut as she tried to hold onto whatever nightmare had woken her up, but it was already fading. There was only one thing she remembered about it. Billy. She jumped when she heard a loud ringing coming from the kitchen and looked at her clock.

"What the hell?" She frowned, seeing it was five in the morning.

"Would someone answer that goddamn phone!" Dustin shouted from his bedroom.

"Have you forgotten that you've got legs?" Karmen rolled her eyes, as she stumbled out of her bed.

All she got in response was an annoyed groan, as she walked past his room to see him pulling his duvet over his head. Rubbing her eyes, she made her way to the kitchen, almost bumping into Mrs Henderson who was coming out of her room.

"Don't worry, Claudia. I've got it" Karmen mumbled, as Mrs Henderson nodded and stumbled back to her bedroom.

With a yawn, Karmen picked up the phone, as she leant against the wall. She wondered why someone would be calling so early in the morning.

"Hello?" She questioned but got no response.

"Hello? Anyone there?" She repeated as she could hear faint breathing on the other end of the line.

"Karmen?" A familiar voice cried; their voice heavy with unshed tears.

"Billy? What's wrong?" She asked, suddenly feeling much more awake.

"I'm sorry. I...I should have listened to you" Billy exclaimed; his breathing unsteady.

"What do you mean? Are you okay?" Karmen insisted, surprised to hear the word 'sorry' leave Billy's lips.

"I don't...I don't know where I am. I don't know how I got here" Billy replied, panic clear in his voice.

"What's the last thing you remember?" Karmen inquired.

"I was on my way...I was going to see Mrs Wheeler at the motel and then my car...I was in a...uh, a warehouse I think but then...shit, I don't know...I don't even remember picking up this phone" Billy admitted.

"It's lucky you remembered this number I guess" Karmen mumbled.

"It's not luck I, uh...memorised it from the folder at work..." He trailed off, his breathing getting quicker like he had seen something.

"Billy? Are you still there?" Karmen panicked, thinking he had stepped away from the phone.

"Yeah. I just...I thought I saw something...shit!" Billy exclaimed as Karmen gripped the phone harder.

"Billy? What's happening?!" Karmen questioned.

"I think there's something out here with me" Billy whispered, in a terrified tone.

"Something?" Karmen queried, noticing he didn't say someone.

"I think I...I was attacked, I'm bleeding and...it's getting closer..." Billy stuttered.

"Tell me what you see, okay? Help me find you" Karmen instructed him.

"Okay, uh...it can't be far from Motel 6. There's a junction just up the road...Junction 20, I think. My car's in the middle of the road" Billy told her.

"Alright, just stay there. I'm coming to get you" Karmen replied.

"Wait! Wait...don't. Don't do that" Billy said suddenly, as panic began to build in his voice again.

"What? Why not?" Karmen frowned.

"It knows I'm here. It knows I'm calling you. It's waiting" Billy announced.

"It?" Karmen gulped.

"We're waiting for you," Billy said, his voice suddenly deeper, as the line went dead.

"Billy? Billy?!" Karmen cried but got no response.

She immediately grabbed her keys from the counter, and a jacket to cover up her pyjamas. She had almost made it to the front door when Claudia started calling after her.

"Karmen! Where are you going?" Mrs Henderson questioned.

"It's my friend. He's in trouble. I think he's been attacked" Karmen replied.

"It's the middle of the night! It's dangerous to be out at this time-" Claudia began, but Karmen cut her off.

"I know! I'm sorry, I don't have time to explain right now" Karmen insisted, as she opened the door, but Claudia grabbed hold of her arm.

"Wait! Let me grab my car keys" Claudia announced, as she wrapped her dressing gown around herself.

"Claudia, you really don't need to. I'll be fine. I can handle myself" Karmen exclaimed.

"I know that. But two pairs of eyes are better than one" Claudia explained.

"What about Dustin?" Karmen frowned.

"I'll send him over to the neighbours" Claudia replied, as Karmen nodded.

"Thank you" She smiled, happy for the help.

"So, is there something I should know?" Claudia inquired, as they drove down the motorway.

"Huh?" Karmen frowned, her eyes fixed on the side of the road, hoping to spot Billy, unharmed.

"You seem awfully worried about someone who's just a friend" Claudia pointed out.

"It's not like that" Karmen shook her head.

"Really? Because I've seen this Billy when he comes to give you a lift in the morning. I mean if I was ten years younger..." Claudia trailed off, with a smirk.

"Claudia!" Karmen gaped, nudging the older woman.

"Okay, okay. More like twenty years. But c'mon, Karmen. He's gorgeous!" Claudia explained.

"So is my boyfriend" Karmen retorted.

"You're certainly a lucky lady" Claudia chuckled.

"The thing is with Billy...he has no one. His family hate him. He has no real friends. He needs me" Karmen went on.

"And that's all it is?" Claudia asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I'm not a cheater, Claudia" Karmen insisted.

"That didn't answer my question" Claudia pointed out.

"It's not...wait! That's his car!" Karmen cried as she spotted the familiar Camaro sprawled across the middle of the road.

"Billy!" Karmen called out, as she rushed out of the car the moment it

stopped.

"Billy?! Where are you..." Karmen trailed off, as she saw the driver's door was wide open.

She felt her heart stop for a moment when she spotted blood on the dashboard, as her eyes followed the trail of blood over to the phone box a few metres away.

"It looks like he hit something" Claudia stated, looking at the broken windshield.

Karmen inspected the broken glass further and saw there was a strange oozing substance on the windshield. She cautiously raised her hand out and grimaced as she touched the sticky fluid, wondering what it was.

"We should call the police" Claudia announced.

"No! We can't" Karmen shook her head.

"He could be hurt" Claudia suggested.

"If we tell the police he's been in an accident the first person they'll tell is his dad. If he sees what's happened to this car..." Karmen trailed off, not wanting to imagine what Neil Hargrove would do to his son.

"Then what should we do?" Claudia questioned.

"I can find him" Karmen replied.

"How?" Claudia frowned.

"Trust me. I can do it. I just need a few minutes" Karmen explained.

"...Kids these days" Claudia sighed, as she walked back to her car.

Karmen then crawled into Billy's car and reached into the back seat for Billy's lifeguard uniform. Taking a deep breath, she gripped onto the white shirt and created an image of him wearing the uniform in her mind. She hadn't used her ability to search for a person's aura

since Halloween and wasn't sure she'd even be able to find him. However, soon enough she found his red aura almost on the other side of Hawkins, frowning when she realised, he seemed to be in the middle of a field. Just as she was about to open her eyes, she noticed something strange about his aura. Directly in the centre, there was a black section. It made no sense. Everyone's aura that she had ever seen was only one colour. Something was wrong. Very wrong.

By the time the pair were finally able to track Billy down, the sun was up, and people were pouring into the community pool. Half an hour ago Karmen had sensed his aura near their work, much to the pair's surprise. She grimaced when she saw a group of teenagers walk past the car and begin to snigger when they could tell Karmen was still in her pyjama's.

"Thank God" Karmen sighed in relief when she spotted a familiar tanned boy walking into the storerooms.

"How did you know he was here?" Claudia frowned.

"Lucky guess" Karmen shrugged, with a dorky smile.

"Well, I'm glad he seems alright...and that I don't have work today" Claudia yawned.

"I'm so sorry Claudia. I really thought he was in trouble" Karmen stated.

"I know. You're a good girl" Claudia told her.

"Who's wasted your whole morning. Are you sure you don't want to chuck me out?" Karmen suggested, only half-joking.

"Don't be silly, Karmen. Your family now" Claudia smiled at her, patting her shoulder.

A large grin spread across Karmen's face, as she leant over and pulled Claudia into a quick hug.

"I better go relieve the neighbours from babysitting Dusty. He'll be wondering what's going on" Claudia explained, as they pulled away.

"Tell him I'm sorry. I'll be home soon and catch a quick nap before work" Karmen exclaimed, as she walked out the car.

"See you later, honey" Claudia waved at her, as Karmen began to rush towards the pool.

She held her coat tighter to her body, trying to ignore the looks she was getting from everyone. Billy was in so much trouble.

"Billy?" Karmen called out, as she opened the metal door and made her way down the corridor.

"Billy! It's Karmen...you know the girl you called at 5 am and has been searching for you all morning!" Karmen exclaimed, angrily.

She came to a halt when she spotted him with his back turned to her, his hand on a chemical bottle.

"Hiding's not going to help you know. God, I'm so mad at you!" Karmen grumbled, approaching him, but he made no sign that he knew she was there.

"C'mon, this isn't funny...Billy?" Karmen went on, placing her hand on his shoulder.

Suddenly, Billy sprung around and pinned her to the wall, his grip hard on her shoulders. Karmen felt her heart begin to beat rapidly at the vacant expression on his sweaty face. Her legs were begging her to run, but she didn't fight against him.

"What happened last night?" She asked, quietly.

"You shouldn't have come here" Billy mumbled.

"I was worried about you" She admitted.

"What have we been doing, Karmen?" Billy questioned, his grip on her loosening.

"I don't understand..." Karmen's voice trailed off, as one of Billy's hands trailed up to cup her face.

"I'm talking about how you're the first person I thought to call when I was in trouble. I'm talking about how you've been searching for me for hours after just one phone call...there's something between us. There always has been" Billy explained, his thumb stroking her cheek.

"Billy don't say that" Karmen sighed, knowing what he was trying to say.

"You're lying to me and worst of all your lying to yourself...I can prove it" Billy stated, his eyes dropping to her lips.

Before Karmen could even process what he was saying, his lips were being pressed against hers, as he cupped her face. She felt the same spark that always happened when they kissed but quickly came to her senses. The next second she was pulling away from him, shock written all over her face.

"Stop, we can't" Karmen shook her head, as he tried to lean in again.

"I know you feel the same. Remember our kiss at Halloween? You wanted me then" Billy insisted, as some small part of her knew he was right.

"I'm with Steve now!" Karmen retorted, placing her hands over his.

"I know. And I know you love him. But you love me too" Billy told her, as she looked away from him.

"Billy, I care about you...a lot. But I love Steve...It's always going to be Steve" Karmen sighed, as she pulled his hands away from her face.

"I need you, Karmen" Billy cried, tears welling in his eyes.

"You've got me. You always will. Just...not like that" Karmen replied, touching his face with her hand, softly.

A tear fell down Billy's cheek, as she brushed it away with her thumb. A moment later, Billy's arms were pulling her into a tight hug as he gripped onto her shoulders. Karmen slowly wrapped her arms around his waist, feeling awful that she was the reason he was so upset. She couldn't cheat on Steve, no matter how much she cared about Billy.

He dropped his head into the crook of her neck, as she could feel a few stray tears drop down her collar bone.

"I'm sorry..." Billy mumbled, his lips brushing against her skin.

Suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her neck, as she immediately pulled away. She looked in horror at the blood now coating Billy's lips, her hand flying to her neck and crying out in pain when she realised, he had bitten her. Stumbling away from him, she pulled her hand back and saw her hand was already coated in blood.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" She gasped, shakily.

"He told me to do it. I had to do it. Had to do it" Billy repeated, as he began banging his fists against his head.

Karmen began edging towards the door, as Billy shook, repeating the words over and over again. The moment his back was turned she bolted out of the storeroom. With adrenaline coursing through her veins, she rushed down the corridor and almost ran into the metal door. Karmen ripped it open, rushing through the doorway as her breath came out in short gasps. She stumbled towards the pool, pulling her hand away from the wound on her neck. She let out a horrified sound when she saw that mixed in with the red blood on her hand, there was a black ooze weeping from her neck.

"Karmen? Are you okay?" A voice broke her out of her thoughts.

Mrs Wheeler was now standing in front of her, concern clear on her face, as her gaze fell on the blood dripping from her neck. There was a loud bang behind Karmen, as she turned to see Billy slamming the metal door shut, finding her eyes in the crowd.

"Help me" Karmen begged, as Mrs Wheeler's eyes shifted between the two.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this longer chapter! I'm not sure how happy I am with this chapter, as it was difficult to write, hopefully, Billy didn't come off as OOC. Unfortunately for Karmen, this encounter is about to set off a very bad chain of events. Please

leave a review:)

shadowxofxdarkness: Thank you:) I'm really glad you're enjoying their relationship, it's about to get very rocky!

NicoleR85: Thanks for the review:) I love both boys too, so it's very difficult for me to choose who Karmen will end up with, but at the moment her heart's still with Steve.

tazsgirl6969: I hope you like the chapter!

teenwolfismylife101: Poor Billy indeed, if only Karmen had got to him sooner:(Thanks for the review!

Winchestergirl101: I'm glad you're all caught up and still enjoying! Great username and profile pic btw, haha.

33. Possessed

Billy didn't give Mrs Wheeler any time to think over her choices, as he was storming towards Karmen, a dark look in his eyes.

"Go...go!" Mrs Wheeler exclaimed as she pushed Karmen behind her.

Mrs Wheeler wasn't sure what was happening, but Karmen was injured and it looked like it was Billy's doing. Karmen did as she was told and began to rush in the other direction, as she could hear screams from the children around her.

"Billy, stop!" Mrs Wheeler yelled, holding her arms out to stop him from getting any further.

Without giving her another glance, he shoved the older woman into the wall, his muscular frame making it easy. Mrs Wheeler slumped against the wall, as parents and children began to run towards the exit. Karmen tried to follow them, but the exit to the pool had become blocked by the terrified swimmers. She turned to see Billy was already gaining on her and changed direction towards the fire exit at the back of the building. She dashed down the side of the building which had a large fence surrounding it, meaning there was nowhere to run but forward. She allowed herself to look behind quickly and frowned when she saw Billy was no longer following her. Karmen didn't stop, as she knew the fire exit would be around the next corner. She slid to a halt when she almost collided with Billy, who also knew where the fire exit was. He had gone around the other side of the building and had managed to cut her off.

"Billy...it's me. It's Karmen. What are you doing?" Karmen cried as he began to advance on her.

"I'll take you to him" Billy nodded as if he couldn't hear her.

"Stop! I said stop!" Karmen shouted, holding out her hand, as Billy came to a halt.

They could both see the blue sparks flickering on her palm, as a blue orb of power began to materialise.

"Could you really do it?" Billy tilted his head, as Karmen backed up against the fence.

"Could you really hurt me?" Billy questioned, as Karmen dropped her hand.

"That's not what I was doing" Karmen retorted, as Billy frowned.

She suddenly threw her hand against the metal fence, as the blue orb melted the barrier. Karmen quickly ducked through the new opening and ran. She didn't look back as she made her way through the parking lot, only stopping when a car pulled out in front of her.

"Get in!" Mrs Wheeler exclaimed, from the driver's seat.

Not needing to be told twice, Karmen ripped open the passenger seat door and fell in, as Mrs Wheeler pressed down on the pedal. They both looked to their right as Billy ran after them, but he soon realised he would never be able to keep up with the car.

"Seatbelt" Mrs Wheeler mumbled, as Karmen turned to give her an unimpressed look.

"Do you have something I can use to stop the bleeding?" Karmen queried, as blood began to drip onto the car seat.

"I have a jumper in the backseat but..." Mrs Wheeler trailed off, as Karmen grabbed it and pressed it to her bleeding wound.

"...It's expensive" Mrs Wheeler murmured, turning her eyes back to the road.

"I need you to take me to Starcourt Mall" Karmen informed her.

"What? No, you need to go to the hospital" Mrs Wheeler retorted.

"I can't" Karmen shook her head.

"Then you at least need to go to the police. Billy attacked you! That is what happened...right?" Mrs Wheeler inquired, still confused.

"It's complicated...look, I need to get to Steve" Karmen sighed.

"I don't see how your boyfriend is going to be able to help in this situation" Mrs Wheeler scoffed.

"He'll understand things a hell of a lot more than you will" Karmen stated.

"What does that mean?" Mrs Wheeler frowned.

"It means that you're clueless" Karmen mumbled.

"I know a lot more than you teenagers think" Mrs Wheeler grumbled.

"Your son is dating my sister...did you know that?" Karmen questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"...Mike and El are dating?! I thought they were just friends!" Mrs Wheeler gaped, as Karmen had to stop herself from laughing.

"Case and point" Karmen declared, as she took a walkie talkie out of her jacket.

"Who are you calling?" Mrs Wheeler questioned, as Karmen shushed her.

Her adrenaline was starting to wear off and the wound on her neck was hurting more than she had expected. Turning the walkie talkie on, she hoped that Dustin would have gotten to the mall by now, as she knew that had been his plan the day before.

"Dustin! Dustin, come in! I've got a code red. I repeat a code red" Karmen announced into the walkie talkie.

She waited for a reply and threw her head back against the car seat when she heard nothing.

"Dustin, I seriously need you right now. Please pick up" Karmen all but begged.

"Karmen? What's wrong?" Dustin suddenly answered, concern clear in his voice.

"Where are you?" Karmen inquired.

"At Scoops-" Dustin was cut off, as another voice could be heard.

"Karmen, what's going on?" Steve asked as Karmen sagged in relief at hearing her boyfriend's voice.

"I need you to meet me in the Starcourt parking lot. Bring the first aid kit" Karmen told him.

"Why?" Steve questioned, a panicked edge to his voice.

"I can't explain right now but-" Karmen started but Steve cut her off.

"You can't just tell me to bring a first aid kit! Are you hurt? Karmen, please tell me what's happening" Steve begged.

"He's back. The Mindflayer is back" Karmen announced, hearing dead silence from the other end.

"...How long until you get here?" Steve queried.

"Ten minutes. I need you to try to get a hold of everyone. Especially Will and El" Karmen explained.

"Okay. Yeah, we will. Just...please get here soon" Steve insisted.

"I love you" Karmen sighed.

"I love you too" Steve replied, as Karmen dropped the walkie talkie into her lap.

Karmen had never been happier to see the mall, as Mrs Wheeler pulled up to the front entrance. She was ready to jump out, when Mrs Wheeler grabbed her arm to stop her.

"Hold on. I need some answers" Mrs Wheeler insisted.

"I'm sorry but I really don't have time for this" Karmen retorted.

"Is Mike in danger? Is Nancy?" Mrs Wheeler asked as Karmen caved in.

"If I'm right...we're all in danger" Karmen admitted.

"Are you going to be alright?" Mrs Wheeler frowned.

"I...I don't know" Karmen laughed, sadly.

Reluctantly, Mrs Wheeler let go of her arm, as she spotted Steve coming out the entrance of the mall.

"Did you go? To the motel?" Karmen questioned, not needing to elaborate more.

"No. Thank God" Mrs Wheeler mumbled, realising what could have happened to her if she had.

"What changed your mind?" Karmen went on.

"My family" Mrs Wheeler confessed.

"Thank you. You're not exactly my favourite person but...thank you" Karmen told her.

"Be careful" Mrs Wheeler exclaimed, as Karmen nodded and exited the car.

Steve's heart stopped the moment he saw Karmen stumbling towards him, her hand holding a jumper to her neck. He ran forward, pushing through the crowds, as he grabbed her shoulders.

"Are you okay?" He inquired, seeing the blood on her hands.

"No" Karmen cried, as a tear ran down her cheek.

Steve instantly pulled her into his arms, as Karmen sobbed, a mixture of fear and relief causing her outburst. She told herself everything would be alright now. It always was when she was in Steve's arms.

"Who did this to you?" Steve questioned, as Karmen hopped onto the table in the backroom of Scoops.

"You're not going to like it..." Karmen trailed off.

"Billy? Billy did this to you?!" Steve guessed, a wave of unusual anger

on his face.

"He's not himself, Steve" Karmen shook his head.

"Oh, because it's farfetched to think he could attack someone? I still have scars from our showdown at Halloween" Steve scoffed, as he took out the first aid kit.

"It was different! It's like he was possessed" Karmen told him.

"Like Will?" Steve realised as Karmen nodded.

She opened her mouth to say more but the door suddenly swung open and Dustin ran in, his face losing its colour the moment he saw the blood on Karmen's neck.

"I'm okay, Dustin. It's...just a scratch" Karmen informed him, as the younger boy rushed over to her.

He pulled her into a hug, which she gladly returned, knowing that the call over the walkie talkie must have freaked him out.

"You're going to be okay?" Dustin questioned, as she pulled away.

"Of course. I'm always okay" Karmen insisted, ruffling his hair.

Steve sighed as he went back to sorting through the first aid kit, trying to find some gauze and bandage. Karmen was far from okay, and he knew it.

"How could Billy be possessed by the Mindflayer? El locked him in the upside-down, right?" Steve questioned.

"I don't know...maybe it's opened again? Or...or maybe someone's trying to get through it again?" Karmen guessed.

"But wouldn't we know about it?" Steve pointed out.

"Well, what was the first sign the first time this happened? Someone became possessed" Karmen explained.

"Good point" Steve mumbled, as the door swung open again.

"Who's got possessed?" Robin frowned, her eyes widening when she saw the blood on Karmen's hands.

"Uh...we weren't...it's not..." Steve stuttered, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Billy attacked me. I was just saying...uh, he went crazy. Like he was possessed or something" Karmen told her, as it wasn't far from the truth.

"Shouldn't you be at the police station?" Robin suggested as Steve wet a few pieces of gauze.

"It's-" Steve began, but Robin cut him off.

"Complicated?" Robin rolled her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Robin, I do want to tell you but it's too dangerous" Steve sighed.

"Right" Robin scoffed, crossing her arms.

Steve brought the first aid kit over to the table and helped to push Karmen's hair away from her shoulder.

"Okay, are you ready?" Steve inquired, as Karmen nodded.

She slowly pulled the jumper away, letting the group see the wound on her neck, which was worse than they had been expecting. As blood started to run down her neck, it was too much for Dustin to handle, who's eyes rolled into the back of his head, as he fainted. Luckily, he was caught by Robin, who looked away from the blood, feeling sick herself.

"Is he okay?" Karmen queried, as Robin nodded.

"Jesus, Karmen...what did Billy do to you?" Steve questioned, as he began to clean the wound.

"He...bit me" Karmen admitted.

"Bit you?" Steve asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I know it sounds weird. He just got angry suddenly and lashed out" Karmen explained.

"I'm surprised you're not the one fainting, Steve" Robin exclaimed, as she moved Dustin to a nearby chair.

"I've kind of got used to cleaning wounds. Usually on myself" Steve shrugged, as he pressed a piece of gauze against the wound and went to pick up the large dressing.

"Are you two spies or something?" Robin suggested as the pair shared a small laugh.

"We're just two unlucky teens" Karmen replied, as Steve stuck the large dressing over the wound, which covered the side of her neck.

Karmen hopped off the table and walked over to Dustin, who had started to wake up, looking around confused. Steve went to wash the blood off his hands, as Robin spotted tears had begun to well in his eyes. She placed her hand on his shoulder, understanding how terrified he must have been when he thought he might lose Karmen.

"Ugh, that was disgusting" Dustin murmured, as Karmen chuckled, turning her head to look at Steve.

She gritted her teeth when she saw Robin with her hand on his shoulder, as she could hear them whispering to each other. She knew it was a stupid time to get jealous, but she couldn't help it.

"Steve?" Robin questioned, as she picked up the last piece of gauze, he had used to clean Karmen's wound.

"Yeah?" He asked as he turned to look at her.

"Does this look normal to you?" Robin frowned, as she saw instead of blood on the gauze, there was only a black substance.

"She's fine" Steve insisted, as he threw the gauze in the bin.

"Did you manage to get any of the others on the walkie talkie?" Karmen asked Dustin, who shook his head.

"El and Max were in here earlier, they could still be in the mall?" Steve suggested as Karmen stood up.

"C'mon, we need to look for them" Karmen announced.

"Woah, woah. Slow down. You're hurt. You need to rest" Steve insisted.

"Steve, where do you think Max is going to go when she leaves the mall? Home!" Karmen pointed out.

"Home to Billy" Steve realised, his eyes widening.

"You think you can hold the fort for a bit longer?" Steve asked, looking at Robin.

"It's what I've been doing all summer" Robin shrugged.

It was surprisingly easy to find the teenagers, as they overheard people gossiping about a scene happening outside where a young girl had just told her boyfriend 'I dump your ass'.

"I only know one girl who would say that" Karmen announced, as they walked out the entrance.

"El!" Karmen called out, once she noticed the group of kids.

"Hi..." El trailed off, looking at her shoes, with a guilty expression.

"Are you okay?" Karmen inquired, unable to keep the concern out of her voice.

"Yes...what's wrong?" El frowned, as she saw Steve and Dustin running behind her.

"Dustin? What are you doing here?" Lucas questioned.

"I was hanging out with Steve when Karmen called in about being attacked, and then Steve had to dress her wound which was absolutely disgusting, but then Karmen said that you might be in trouble so we all ran down here...well not Robin, she's still...in

Scoops..." Dustin trailed off, as he saw everyone looking at him with confusion.

"You were attacked? Hurt?" Eleven's eyes widened when she saw the dressing on Karmen's neck.

"It was Billy" Steve announced, as all eyes turned to Max.

"My brother did this to you?" Max gasped, shocked.

"He's not in his right mind...have you felt anything?" Karmen inquired.

"Anything?" Eleven asked, not understanding the question.

"Anything upside down related" Karmen clarified.

"No. Nothing" Eleven shook her head.

"I think Billy's been possessed by the Mindflayer" Karmen told them.

"Hold on, are you sure you're not just jumping to conclusions?" Mike suggested.

"No. He was acting crazy. Talking to himself. Your mum was there if you don't believe me-" Karmen began, but Mike cut her off.

"My mum?! Is she alright?" Mike cried.

"Yeah...she's shaken up and questioning a lot. But she's okay. She drove me here and...wait, where are you going?" Karmen exclaimed as Mike had begun to walk away.

"Home!" Mike retorted.

"But what about the Mindflayer?" Karmen insisted.

"It's still locked away in the Upside Down. El would know. Right, El?" Mike pointed out, turning to his possible ex-girlfriend.

"I'm the only one who could open and close the gate" Eleven nodded.

"But what if something got left here? Or...or the government tried-"

Karmen suggested.

"You're clutching at straws because you don't want to believe your other boyfriend could hurt you" Mike retorted.

"Hey, watch yourself, Wheeler" Steve warned.

"Mike's right, Karmen. Billy's the bad guy. He always has been. Maybe you just haven't seen it until now" Lucas sighed, following Mike.

"Max?" Karmen questioned, hoping she would believe her.

"I thought Billy was changing but...I guess I was wrong" Max mumbled, as El put her arm around her friend's shoulders.

"Will you please promise me not to go home tonight at least?" Karmen insisted.

"You could come with me...sleepover?" El asked as Max grinned.

"Sounds good" Max smiled, as the bus pulled up to their stop.

"C'mon, we better go" Max exclaimed, as she rushed towards the bus stop.

"I closed the gate. He can't get out...Promise" Eleven told Karmen, who sighed but nodded to her.

"Maybe I am clutching at straws" Karmen murmured.

"No. Billy literally tore a chunk out of your neck-" Steve began.

"Ugh, I'm going to throw up" Dustin grimaced.

"He's an asshole but that is...not normal" Steve pointed out.

"I believe you" A small voice announced from behind them.

"What?" Karmen frowned, as Will stepped forward.

"The past couple of days I keep getting this feeling in the back of my neck...I can still feel him. You're right. Something's happening" Will

explained.

"Why didn't you say anything, man?" Steve questioned.

"It's not like anyone would listen to me" Will shrugged, as he started to rush off to catch up with Mike and Lucas.

"Looks like it's just the three of us" Karmen sighed.

"The Scoops Troop" Dustin grinned.

Karmen flopped onto her bed happily, absolutely exhausted from the stress of the last twenty-four hours. Steve dropped onto the bed beside her, as he pulled her close to him, so they were spooning. They had left Dustin at Scoops, feeling bad for leaving Robin on her own during the lunch rush.

"Steve, you need to go" Karmen giggled, as Steve began peppering kisses down her arm.

"No, I want to stay here with you" Steve pouted.

"Dustin can't help at Scoops for long. Child labour laws and whatnot" Karmen pointed out.

"What if Billy comes here?" Steve suggested, holding onto her tighter.

"Claudia's in the other room. All the doors are locked...and besides, after what happened at the pool this morning, he's going to be lying low" Karmen explained.

"There's going to be a lot of questions coming up" Steve mumbled.

"Which is exactly why I need sleep" Karmen replied, turning around to face him.

"Call me if you need anything," Steve told her.

"Even a foot rub?" Karmen questioned.

"Even a foot rub" He chuckled, as he leaned forward and kissed her

softly.

"I love you so much," Steve said, as he stroked her cheek.

"I love you too" She smiled, as he pressed a kiss to her forehead.

"Now, get going, Harrington. Or Dustin will be calling in a minute" Karmen stated, as Steve rolled out of the bed.

"Oh, can you open the window before you go?" Karmen questioned, stripping off her jacket, feeling too hot.

"Baby, it's freezing in here," Steve told her, but he opened the window wide anyway.

"I think you've been around the freezer at Scoops too much. It's boiling" Karmen mumbled, as she dropped her head onto her pillow.

"Goodnight...well, afternoon...good afternoon?" Steve exclaimed.

"Bye Steve" Karmen giggled, turning onto her back, as he quietly shut the door.

Karmen's eyes slowly began to flutter shut, as her exhaustion took over. She looked down at her watch and saw it had just gone 1'oclock. With a sigh, she looked back up to the ceiling but found... the ceiling wasn't there anymore. Her head whipped around as she realised, she wasn't even in her bedroom anymore.

"What the hell?" She cried, when she saw she was in some type of warehouse.

She looked back down at her watch, her eyes widening when she read it was almost midnight. She had lost almost twelve hours in a split second. She backed up a few steps, her breathing starting to become erratic as she collided with something. She whipped around, paralyzed to the spot when she saw Billy standing there, with a sad look on his face.

"I'm sorry...I never wanted this" Billy cried.

"Stay away from me!" Karmen exclaimed, her heart pounding in her

ears.

"I tried to stop him. I did. I really did" Billy sobbed, as a tear ran down his cheek.

Despite herself, Karmen couldn't help but feel sorry for him. It was so strange to see someone like Billy cry.

"Did...did you take me from the house? Did you hurt Claudia?" Karmen questioned, not understanding how he could have got to her.

"You walked here" Billy stated.

"What?" She scoffed.

"Look at your feet. You walked here" Billy insisted, as she looked down.

Her socks were completely covered in dirt, as she began to feel how bruised they were. It did feel like she had been walking for miles.

"He called you here" Billy went on.

"He?" She gulped.

"He's been waiting...so long. For you" Billy told her, his voice full of unshed tears.

"Me?" Karmen frowned.

"I thought I was at the wrong time, wrong place...but he wanted me as his host" Billy explained, holding his arms out.

"Jesus..." Karmen mumbled as she saw the black veins running up and down his arms.

"I can feel him in my mind, in my memories. I tried to hold him back but, he's too powerful. He saw what he wanted. I'm sorry" Billy told her.

"Sorry for what?" Karmen questioned, a shiver going down her spine.

Billy suddenly raised his arm out, pulling down the sleeve of

Karmen's pyjama top, as she sprung back. Her palm flickered with unstable blue energy, ready to attack if needed.

"Look..." Billy trailed off, his eyes on her neck.

Slowly, Karmen looked down at her shoulder, her mouth going dry when she saw black veins running past the dressing on her neck.

"No, no, no..." Karmen panicked, her breath becoming erratic.

"It's slower for you. It wasn't a direct transmission. But it's started" Billy informed her.

"Why? Why me?" She cried, as tears began to well in her eyes.

"You're the one, Karmen. You're the only one who can do it" Billy announced, as Karmen heard a strange sound from behind her.

"Do what?" She questioned, feeling the hairs of the back of her neck stand on end.

"You're the only one who can kill Eleven," Billy told her.

Terror washed over her, as she saw him looking at something behind her shoulder. She wanted to run to safety, but her feet had a mind of their own as she slowly turned around. Karmen's blood ran cold as she watched a large fleshy creature appear out of the darkness, over twenty feet tall and growling. Billy flinched as she let out an ear-splitting scream, shutting his eyes as the creature approached them.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this monster long chapter...did you see what I did there? Sorry bad dad joke, haha. I'm going on holiday today so my updates might be a bit out of place for the next few weeks. I'm so excited about what's coming in this story, I have so many ideas! Please leave a review:)

Paigecute: I'm really glad I've got you shipping them! Yep, you've got me, I was a big Delena fan back in 2010, haha. Karmen's going to be very important as you can probably see in this chapter. It's going to be really fun exploring this darker side of her. Thank you so much for this review:)

Amadeusblack: At the moment Steve and Karmen are still endgame, don't worry!

tazsgirl6969: Thank you:) I hope you like this chapter!

NicoleR85: Aw, thank you! So there you have it, Billy bit Karmen to infect her, although he's says it wasn't a direct transmission...hmm, that'll be explained more soon. I hope you enjoyed this chapter:)

teenwolfismylife101: Uh oh, sorry for upsetting you, haha. I hope you like this chapter just as much:)

AshleyMarie2010: I did take some inspiration from Void Stiles, I just loved that storyline so much. Season 3 of Teen Wolf was amazing! Thanks for the review:)

shadowxofxdarkness: I hope this chapter lived up to your expectations! Poor Billy did go through so much on the show, we'll have to wait and see if Karmen being around can change things. Thanks for the review!

34. I've Got You

Karmen begged her feet to begin moving as the fleshy creature scuttled towards her with its scorpion-like legs. She felt tears begin to fall down her cheeks but found she could no longer scream. She couldn't even move her eyes. One of its limbs suddenly lunged towards her, gripping her leg and dragging her towards its mouth. Karmen fell onto her back with a cry, as a tentacle-like limb shot out from its mouth. She felt herself choke as it attached itself over her entire face, as a disgusting black fluid began to enter her mouth. A moment later she felt sparks flickering all around her body, causing the large monster above her to pull back with a growl. Karmen rolled to her side, coughing up the remaining black sludge, as she tried to catch her breath.

Not compatible. Not compatible. Not compatible.

Karmen placed her hands over her ears as the words repeated over and over and she realised that the sound was coming from her own head.

"Interesting defence mechanism" Billy mumbled from behind her, his voice deeper than before.

"Yeah...so's this" Karmen exclaimed, as she spun her leg around, pushing Billy off his feet.

She instantly pushed herself up, rushing towards the large warehouse doors, but she could hear the creature scuttling behind her already. Holding her hands together, she began to create a large blue orb. Whipping her body around, she threw it towards the creature, hitting it head-on. She gasped as felt severe pain in her stomach and looked down to see blood beginning to pool under her shirt. She frowned as she looked to Billy and saw he too was on his knees, blood dripping from his stomach. They were all connected. Karmen grimaced as she saw a gaping hole was now burnt through the monster, as it flopped to the floor. However, it clearly wasn't dead. While the creature was dazed, she limped towards the exit as fast as she could and didn't look back. She couldn't believe her luck when she saw a car on the main road and quickly rushed forward to flag it down.

"Help! I need some help!" Karmen cried, waving her arms around as she stepped into the road.

The car stopped just before it could hit her, as the driver's eyes widened when he noticed the blood covering her neck and chest. Not giving the man any more time to think, Karmen rushed over to the passenger's side and opened the door.

"Drive...drive!" Karmen insisted, as she looked behind them and wondered why the creature wasn't following them.

"What the hell happened to you?" The man inquired, looking her up and down.

"I was attacked..." Karmen trailed off, lifting her shirt and seeing a large burn was now covering her stomach.

"You want me to take you to the police?" The man asked, his eyes flitting between her and the road.

"No! No Police. I just need you to take me home. Back to Hawkins" Karmen told him.

She needed to make sure Dustin and Claudia were safe. Even if she did walk out of the house herself, she couldn't remember anything.

"Anyone know you're out here?" The man questioned.

"What?" Karmen frowned, seeing that his eyes were on her more than the road.

"Someone drop you off out here?" The man guessed.

"No...I walked...I think..." Karmen sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose, as her head began to pound.

"Those cuts from tonight?" The man went on, as Karmen glared at him.

"Yes, they're from...wait, you just missed the turn" Karmen pointed out, but got no reply from him.

"No one knows you're here, somebody's already attacked you...the opportunity's fallen into my lap..." The man trailed off.

Her frown deepened when he pulled over into a layby and felt herself stiffen when he turned the engine off.

"What are you doing?" Karmen gulped, as he turned to her.

"I saved you...don't I deserve a reward?" The man smirked, as Karmen's hand reached from the handle.

The man quickly locked all the doors and was on top of her in a matter of seconds. Karmen let out a scream, as she tried to push him off her, but he was far stronger. Just when his face was inches away from her own, Karmen suddenly blacked out, her body going limp. Her eyes fluttered back open a moment later...or so she thought. Her hands flew to her mouth as she realised, she was standing outside the car, while the man was lying on his back, half out of the vehicle. He had blood all over his neck, mixed with a black substance.

"No, no, no..." Karmen trailed off, as she saw herself in the car window.

Blood was covering her mouth and hands, and it certainly wasn't her own. Just as she was about to step forward and check whether the man was still alive, she blinked. And the next moment she was outside the Henderson's house. Karmen looked down and realised that her clothes had changed, not to mention there was no longer even a speck of blood on her. She didn't know who's clothes she was wearing but she knew they weren't her own. She raised a hand above her head to block out the blinding sun. Sun? How long had she been out, she wondered.

"Karmen? Are you alright?" Ms Henderson inquired, as she opened the door to her house, having seen the younger girl in the yard.

"I...I'm fine. Are you okay? Nothing happened last night?" Karmen asked, limping towards her.

"No...are you sure you're alright? You don't look well" Ms Henderson pointed out, taking in Karmen's waxy skin and the way she was

limping.

"I'm just tired" Karmen replied, as she came to stand beside the older woman.

"I thought you said you were going to spend the day with Steve" Ms Henderson stated.

"When...when did I say that?" Karmen frowned.

"Last night. You said you were going to stay around his" Ms Henderson informed her, as Karmen gave her a confused look.

"I talked to you last night?" Karmen tried to clarify, as Ms Henderson nodded.

"Do you need to sit down?" Ms Henderson queried, noticing Karmen's strange behaviour.

"No, I'm fine. I just...did I say anything else last night? Anything at all?" Karmen insisted.

"Not really, just that I might not see you much for the next few days" Ms Henderson shrugged.

"Where's Dustin?" Karmen inquired.

"With Steve...which you should know. What's going on, Karmen?" Ms Henderson frowned.

"Nothing! Everything's fine. I'll see you later, okay?" Karmen replied, as she began to stumble away.

"Where are you going?" Ms Henderson asked, rushing after her.

"To Steve...I need to talk to him" Karmen mumbled.

"Then let me drive you" Claudia insisted, putting her arm around Karmen's shoulder and pulling her towards her car.

"You don't need to-" Karmen began, but Claudia cut her off.

"You look like you can barely walk. And maybe if you don't want to

talk to me about what's wrong, you'll talk to him" Claudia explained, opening the door for her.

"Thank you" Karmen nodded.

Karmen had managed to convince Ms Henderson to leave her outside Scoops, even though the older woman clearly didn't want to. The last thing Karmen wanted was to get someone else involved in the mess she had gotten into. She self-consciously pulled the plaid shirt she was wearing higher, noticing the stares from some of the children in Scoops, as they looked at the dressing on her neck.

"Robin, is Steve in the back?" Karmen inquired, as Robin's eyes widened when she saw the state that Karmen was in.

"Jesus, you look even worse than yesterday" Robin told her.

"Appreciate that, thanks" Karmen grumbled.

"Uh, yeah he's in the back...don't you think you should go to the hospital..." Robin trailed off, as Karmen was no longer listening to her.

"You totally thought he was an evil Russian!" Dustin exclaimed as Karmen opened the door.

"No, I didn't!" Steve retorted, neither having noticed her.

"Yes, you did" Dustin exclaimed, with an exasperated tone.

"Oh thank God, you're alright" Karmen announced, as she rushed towards the younger boy, pulling him to a hug.

"Should I not be?" Dustin frowned, patting her on the back.

"Uh, no...I was just worried about you" Karmen mumbled, pulling back.

"Did you get any sleep last night?" Steve questioned, noticing the dark circles under her eyes.

"Steve, I need to talk to you. It's about-" Karmen cut herself off mid-sentence, her gaze going blank.

Karmen flinched when she suddenly found herself sitting on top of the table, Steve and Dustin on either side of her. She let her head fall into her hands as she realised, she had blacked out again. The Mindflyer must have realised she was about to tell them what had happened to her and stopped her.

"Hey, are you okay?" Steve asked, placing his hand on her thigh.

"Yeah, I'm just not feeling one hundred percent" Karmen replied, sitting back upright.

"You're all sweaty" Steve frowned, touching her forehead lightly.

"With lines like that it's a wonder why it took us so long to get together" Karmen joked.

"Sweaty or not, you're still the hottest girl in Hawkins" Steve grinned, pressing a chaste kiss to her lips.

"Ew, stop!" Dustin complained, jumping off the table.

"Are you sure we shouldn't take you to the hospital? Your wound could be infected" Steve stated.

"No. I'm fine, really" Karmen promised, resting her head on his shoulder.

"Hold on...I think I might have the cure for your problem" Dustin announced, as he rushed out of the room.

"So, what was that about earlier? It seemed like you had something important to tell me and then you just stopped yourself" Steve suggested, as Karmen bit her lip.

She wanted so badly to tell him everything that had happened. Billy, the Mindflyer, her blackouts, but she was scared. What if she didn't come back the next time the Mindflyer shut her off? She needed to act like everything was normal, she couldn't let Steve get hurt.

"I did have something important to tell you" Karmen informed him, as she lifted her head to look into his eyes.

"Yeah?" He questioned, worried that it was something bad.

"...I'm starting to like this sailor suit," She told him, as Steve scoffed.

"I look like an idiot" He grumbled.

"Maybe a little. But somehow, you're still managing to pull it off" Karmen insisted, nudging his shoulder, as Steve gave her a small smile.

"Here it is! The best ice cream you will ever taste. The cure to everything" Dustin grinned, as he returned with a multicoloured ice cream.

"Uh, what's in that?" Karmen inquired, as he handed her the ice cream.

"Everything" Dustin replied, proudly.

"You used every flavour?" Steve gaped.

"Try it" Dustin insisted, as Karmen attentively gave the ice cream a lick.

"Well...it's certainly different" Karmen laughed, as the flavours hit her tongue.

"I'll have some-" Steve exclaimed, as Karmen kept the ice cream out of his reach.

"Uh uh. You get your own, Harrington" Karmen teased, as he continued to try to grab the ice cream.

Soon he had both his hands holding onto Karmen's arms as he tried to pull her closer to him, making her giggle manically. Dustin shook his head fondly, as he decided to leave them to it, expecting the play fight would end in a make-out session.

"That was surprisingly nice" Karmen admitted, as she ate the last bit of the ice cream cone.

"But we better not let Dustin know that. His heads big enough" Steve suggested, licking the ice cream from his fingers.

"Not as big as Steve 'the hair' Harrington's though" Karmen teased, as they both began laughing.

Karmen's laughter was cut off when her head suddenly began to pound like before, as it felt like her head was being squished in a vice. She put a hand to her forehead, the pain clear on her face.

"Are you okay?" Steve frowned, putting his hand on her back.

"Yeah, just brain freeze" Karmen lied, gritting her teeth.

"No, it's not. Is it your neck hurting?" Steve guessed.

"A little. Can you just...hold me?" Karmen sighed, as Steve nodded and pulled her into a tight hug.

"It's okay, everything's going to be okay" Steve soothed, as he rubbed her back.

Karmen tightened her hold around his shoulders, dropping her head into the crook of his neck. For a few minutes, she had all but forgotten all the terrible events of the past couple of days, but now they were at the forefront of her mind.

"I'm scared, Steve. I'm so scared" Karmen sobbed, feeling a tear drop down her cheek.

"Of what? Talk to me, Karmen. Please" Steve begged, stroking her hair.

Bite him. Bite him. Bite him. The words repeated in her head over and over as she flinched. She could feel his skin underneath her lips. Maybe she didn't have to be alone in this.

"No!" Karmen cried as she pulled back as if she had been burnt.

"Woah, woah. What's wrong?" Steve frowned, as Karmen jumped off the table, visibly shaking.

"I...I need to go" Karmen stuttered, as she began to stumble towards the backdoor.

"Wait, Karmen!" Steve called after her, as she ripped the door open.

"Stay away from me, please" Karmen exclaimed, as she ran out of the room as fast as her legs could carry her.

Karmen didn't stop running until she was out of the building, finding herself in an alleyway behind the mall. She fell to her knees, feeling her breathing getting out of control. It felt like her lungs were about to explode, as she scrunched her eyes shut. She almost hurt Steve. How could she do that? What if she attacked someone else next? She jumped when she felt a hand on her shoulder and looked up to see Billy standing over her, a sad expression on his face.

"I can't...breathe..." Karmen trailed off, hyperventilating.

"You're having a panic attack," Billy told her, crouching down in front of her.

"No...no...I can't..." She repeated her chest heaving under the strain.

"Yes, you can. You can breathe. Just take some deep breaths, okay? In and out" Billy insisted, both of his hands now on her shoulders.

"I...I almost bit...Steve..." Karmen admitted as Billy's eyes widened.

"But you didn't. Just focus on me. You're okay" Billy soothed, as Karmen took some deep breaths.

"How did you find me?" Karmen mumbled.

"The same way you found me last night. We're connected now" Billy told her, as her breathing became less erratic.

"I keep blacking out...I hurt someone last night...there was so much blood..." Karmen stuttered as Billy's hands dropped from her shoulders.

"It activates you when it feels necessary. If you're about to tell someone or if you're in danger...it did it to me last night" Billy explained.

"But you're you now?" Karmen asked as he nodded.

"How many times have you blacked out?" Billy questioned.

"I don't know. A few times now" Karmen replied.

"You need to stop fighting it" Billy advised, as Karmen glared at him.

"Is that what you did? Is that why you did this to me?" Karmen spat out, pushing herself upright.

"No. That was different. I let my guard down because I was angry...sad, I don't know...but I let it in" Billy told her.

"You blacked out?" Karmen guessed as he nodded.

"The next thing I knew you were standing in front of me with blood dripping down your neck and I had blood on my lips. I never wanted to hurt you" Billy insisted.

"I almost did the same to Steve" Karmen sighed.

"But you were able to stop yourself. Because there's more of you left" Billy told her.

"What do you mean?" Karmen frowned.

"Every time you blackout, a little less of you comes back. Your memories...it takes your memories" Billy warned her.

"What kind of memories?" Karmen panicked.

"The important ones. Karmen, I can't...I can't remember my mom's name" Billy admitted, tears welling in his eyes.

"Maybe we can just run away? Get out of Hawkins?" Karmen suggested as he shook his head.

"I already tried that. I was about an hour away and finally thought I

was going to be free...and then I blinked and next thing I know I was back in that warehouse" Billy exclaimed.

"So, there's nothing we can do? We just have to wait around until we're next activated and hurt someone?" Karmen cried.

"I don't know...I just don't want to be alone anymore" Billy murmured, as Karmen gave him a sad look.

"Your dad's not home?" Karmen inquired, as Billy opened the front door of his house.

The pair didn't know what else to do but go home, and Karmen didn't want to put Claudia or Dustin in any more danger, so Billy's house was the only option. There was no one else to turn to but Billy, he was the only one that she could trust herself to be around.

"He's not home much these days. Thank God" Billy replied, as he led her to the bathroom.

Karmen almost did a double-take when she saw herself in the bathroom mirror. She looked awful. Her skin was pasty and pale, her hair was matted and sweaty and she could see blood beginning to pool underneath her plaid shirt.

"I've seen worse," Billy told her, as she couldn't help but let out a small laugh.

"A gentleman as always" She mumbled, as she began trying to unbutton the shirt.

Her hands were shaking too much to get further than the first button, which led Billy to step forward and brush her hands away. He began to unbutton her shirt far slower than she thought necessary, as Karmen realised just how close they were standing. She was distracted when he helped her to pull the shirt off and saw how black veins were now running down to her elbow and across her collarbone. She grimaced as she pulled up her tank top and saw a large burn covering most of her abdomen, which was bleeding in some areas. It hurt like hell.

"Shit...that's worse than mine" Billy frowned, as he grabbed a towel and pressed it against the wound.

"I didn't mean to hurt you" Karmen sighed.

"I know" Billy nodded.

"Do you have any bandages?" Karmen inquired, as he pulled away.

"I think so, Max's mom's first aid kit basically has everything," Billy told her, as she reached behind her to open a cabinet.

He rummaged in there for a few seconds before pulling out a green bag, as Karmen could feel his breath against her face. It felt good against her clammy skin. He poured the contents into the sink and soon found a dressing and bandage.

"It won't be big enough for your wound-" Billy began, but she cut him off.

"You're bleeding too" She pointed out, her eyes dropping to his stomach.

"I'm fine" Billy shook his head, as Karmen's hands reached out to pull up his shirt.

She was horrified to find an almost identical wound on Billy's abdomen, but it seemed to be even worse than hers. She could now notice the way Billy seemed to flinch with every breath.

"You said it wasn't that bad" Karmen scolded, as she grabbed the towel they had been using.

"It doesn't matter" Billy retorted, as she pressed it against his skin.

"Your hurt. That matters" She insisted.

Cautiously, Billy raised his hand and placed it over her own, as their eyes snapped up to meet. Any sparks that she used to feel when she was close to Billy seemed to have increased tenfold since she had been infected. Karmen's heart threatened to beat out of her chest under his intense gaze. But she still didn't get the feeling of warmth

and love she had whenever she was around Steve.

"Do you have any ice?" Karmen questioned, bringing Billy out of his daze.

"What?" He frowned, pulling his hand away from her own.

"I'm too hot" Karmen replied, not sure if her skin suddenly felt more flushed because of the infection or because of Billy being so close.

"You certainly are" Billy couldn't help but smirk, as she scoffed.

"Ice" Karmen insisted, an amused smile on her face.

Billy ushered to where Karmen was still touching him, as she quickly let go of the towel, not missing Billy's smug expression. He left the room, presumably to grab some ice, as Karmen took a deep breath. Running a hand through her hair, she realised it was, in fact, the infection that was causing her to feel so hot. She turned to begin running the cold-water tap, and splashed it over her face, trying to cool down.

"You feel that too?" Billy inquired, with half a dozen ice packs in his hands.

"It's the Mindflayer" Karmen gulped, as Billy walked over to the bath and began running cold water.

"It's growing," Billy told her, as he dropped the numerous ice packs he was holding in the bath.

"What are you doing?" Karmen frowned, as Billy began pulling his jeans down his legs.

"We need to cool down before we pass out" Billy warned her, stripping off his shirt too.

"What happens if we pass out?" Karmen questioned, averting her eyes from his body.

"Nothing good. C'mon" Billy insisted, as he stepped into the bath.

"That water's going to be so cold it could kill us" Karmen mumbled, as he stopped the running water.

"I think that's the least of our worries, Karmen" Billy retorted, as he slowly lowered himself into the bath.

He hissed in shock as the cold water engulfed his limbs, making him grip onto the edge of the bath. Biting her lip, Karmen knew he was right, she was beginning to feel dizzy and needed to cool down as quickly as possible.

"I won't try anything, I swear" Billy insisted, seeing her apprehensive look.

"You're not cheating on Harrington by getting in a bathtub with me" Billy pointed out, as she sighed.

She shimmied out of the jeans she was wearing, as she caught Billy's gaze wandering down her legs. Shaking her head, she cautiously stepped into the bath, gulping when she felt her cold it was.

"It's okay. Come here" Billy soothed, as he reached out to touch her arm.

He pulled her towards him so that her back was pressed against his chest, as she gasped at the feel of the freezing water all around her. Billy wrapped his arms around her, as Karmen tried to relax in the water. After only a few seconds she began to feel better, already feeling less lightheaded.

"I've got you" Billy murmured as she leaned back against him, finally allowing herself to relax.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! Sorry, it took so long to update but I've been on holiday and I'm starting a new job soon, so I've been very busy. Poor Karmen, she's going through a lot at the moment, is she going to let Steve help her, or will she turn to Billy? Please leave a review:)

NicoleR85: Aw, thank you! So glad you're enjoying this story:) Karmen's going to have to put up a big fight if she wants to stop the

Mindflayer from now on.

Angryfanfic: Thanks for the review. Glad you like it:)

tazsgirl6969: Thanks for the review:)

RoseAmeliaSarahNoblePond: Thank you so much:) The writer in me is glad your scared, haha. Karmen made it just about okay out of this chapter, but we'll have to wait and see if she makes it to the end.

pennyblossoms: Aw, thank you:) I hope you like this chapter!

Min234: Thank you so much, that means a lot to me! I hope this chapter lives up to your expectations:)

paulavara40: I hope you like the new chapter!

35. Complete

Neither Karmen or Billy were sure how long they stayed in the bathtub together, but soon enough their skin was pruning, and the water began to warm up. Just as the pair were thinking of getting out, they heard the front door open, as Billy's head snapped up.

"Oh shit" Karmen mumbled, pushing herself out of the bath.

"It must be my dad" Billy panicked as he followed her.

"Sh, maybe he won't come in" Karmen shushed him, as she buttoned up her jeans.

However, just as Billy grabbed his shirt, the bathroom door burst open, revealing an angry-looking Neil Hargrove. Karmen could see the hatred in his eyes as he realised who was in his house. There had been a very heated argument between the two a couple of months ago. Karmen had come around to help Max with her summer homework and had seen the bruises covering most of Billy's face. She had flipped. All the lights in the Hargrove household had burst as she shouted at Neil and told him what an awful father he was. She allowed herself to be forcibly thrown out of the house, only after Billy pleaded with Karmen to let it go. Ever since then, she had always made sure Billy's father wasn't around when she visited Billy or Max. That was until then.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Neil spat out, seeing the state of undress they were both in.

"Dad, nothing happened, we were just-" Billy started, but Neil cut him off by holding his hand up.

"Not another word from you. I thought I told this whore she wasn't welcome in this household" Neil gritted out, as Karmen took a step forward.

"Don't call her that" Billy told him, as he grabbed Karmen's arm, knowing she was close to losing it.

Billy knew how much Karmen hated his father, he could already see the lights flickering in the main room. She was practically itching to attack him.

"Get out" Neil insisted, looming over Karmen.

"With pleasure. Come on, Billy" Karmen retorted.

"He's not going anywhere" Neil announced, as he stood in the doorway, stopping her from getting any further.

"He's your son, not your pet. He can do what he wants" Karmen scoffed.

"You really don't know when to quit, do you?" Neil exclaimed.

"That's rich coming from you. Does it make you feel powerful beating up kids?" Karmen spat out.

"Karmen, stop!" Billy cried as he could see his dad was practically shaking with rage.

"You're pathetic" Karmen goaded him, her mouth running away from her.

Before she could say anything else, Neil raised his hand and slapped her across the cheek. Karmen's head snapped back the impact, as she touched her now bruised cheek. Just as she opened her mouth to speak, Billy suddenly lunged forward and shoved his father into the doorframe, as his hand went around his neck.

"Don't you ever fucking touch her!" Billy screamed slamming Neil's head against the doorframe with his other hand.

Neil seemed to pass out from the impact, as he hung limply under Billy's shaking hands. Karmen gasped as she could see blood was now running down from Billy's own nose. Black blood.

"Billy...you can stop," Karmen told him, as she reached out to place her hand on Billy's shoulder.

"What...what have I done?" Billy stuttered as he let his father's body

drop to the floor.

Karmen quickly crouched down and felt for Neil's pulse, feeling relief flood through her when she felt a steady heartbeat.

"It's okay, he's only knocked out. We can..." Karmen trailed off when she looked up at Billy.

He was staring straight ahead, an emotionless look on his face. The most terrifying thing was the whites of his eyes were now covered in tiny black veins, giving him an almost demonic expression.

"Billy?" Karmen mumbled, as she slowly stood back up.

She took a step back in fear when Billy's eyes snapped up to hers, as he tilted his head in a confused expression. It wasn't Billy in control anymore. She let out a cry when he suddenly grabbed her wrist and dragged her out of the bathroom.

"What are you doing? Let go of me" She panicked, as he continued to pull her roughly.

"Where are you taking me?" Karmen questioned, as he shoved the front door open.

"To Heather's" Billy replied, his voice mixed with another tone.

"You bit her too?" Karmen realised.

"No. I knocked her out, threw her in the boot of my car and brought her to him" Billy replied, not caring that Karmen was almost tripping over her own feet.

Karmen cringed in pain as she heard a voice all around her and recognised it as Heather's. It was as if the girl was calling to her. She could tell Billy could hear it too.

"Let me go" Karmen cried, trying to pull away from Billy's grasp.

"Stop fighting it" Billy growled, as he slammed her against his car.

Karmen felt fear flood through her veins, as she saw the anger in his

eyes, and felt the way his nails were sinking into her skin. Billy wasn't there anymore. Only the Mindflayer. She was all alone.

"Please..." Karmen began, as blackness clouded her vision.

"Are you sure you're not overreacting?" Max queried, as they walked closer to her house.

The night before they had decided to use Eleven's powers to spy on some of the residents in Hawkins, and that had included Max's brother. Eleven had been surprised to find Karmen with him, but even more worrying was the terrified expression Karmen had on her face.

"You don't believe me?" Eleven sighed.

"I believe that you saw some really weird things but Billy's a bit of a...freak" Max stated.

"I heard Karmen screaming" Eleven insisted.

"Yeah, I know, but here's the thing. When Billy is alone with a girl they make, like really crazy noises" Max explained.

"They scream?" Eleven gaped.

"Yeah but like...happy screams" Max informed her.

"Happy screams? What is happy screams?" Eleven insisted, confused.

"It's like...I don't know, he basically makes them feel so good that they...scream. Yuck, I really don't want to be talking about this" Max grimaced.

"So, you think he was doing things to Karmen?" Eleven suggested.

"What else could it be?" Max shrugged.

"She's with Steve. She loves Steve" Eleven pointed out.

"I know but let's be honest. There's always be something there

between them, hasn't there? They have kissed before" Max went on.

"Karmen doesn't cheat" Eleven shook her head, as they stopped outside Max's house.

"His car's not here. Are you sure you want to do this?" Max questioned, as Eleven nodded.

Max cautiously opened the door to her stepbrother's bedroom, knowing if he found out she had been there, she'd be seriously dead. As she and Eleven looked around the room, Max forced herself to open his top draw, expecting to find some disgusting things. She was shocked when all she found were some pictures. Most of them were of Karmen, the one at the top of the pile was of her and Billy in their swimsuits, happy smiles on their faces. He had his arm wrapped around her waist and looked as content as he could be.

"He really likes her" Max mumbled to herself, sadly.

"Max!" Eleven called to her from the bathroom.

"What's wrong?" Max queried, as she entered to see the bath was full of water and had ice packets floating on top.

"There's blood here" Eleven stated looking at the doorframe, that had speckles of blood on it.

"There's more here..." Max trailed off, as she opened the cupboard door.

Eleven took a bin out of the cupboard and found a plaid shirt inside, covered in blood, as well as a lifeguard belt and whistle. Something bad had happened. Neither of them could deny it any longer.

Eleven's heart sunk when they went to the community pool and discovered that Karmen, Billy and Heather had never turned up for their shifts that day. Knowing that there was nothing else they could do, Eleven decided to go into the void to see if she could find them. She was confused when she found herself outside a house she had never been to before. She read the house number at the front and began to wander towards the red front door. Once she stepped

through, all she found was a bathtub filled to the brim with ice. With a gulp, she stepped forward until she was looming over the tub. Suddenly, Karmen burst through the ice, with a frightened look on her face, gasping desperately for air. Her eyes widened when she saw Eleven and tried to reach out for the younger girl.

"Help me" Karmen sobbed, as she was pulled back under by an unknown force.

Eleven quickly tried to grab her but the bathtub had disappeared, only leaving black water underneath her. Eleven let out a loud scream as she watched Karmen get pulled under deeper until she had completely vanished.

"Karmen!" She cried as she felt the water all around her.

Eleven ripped the goggles she had been using off her face, as she tried to regain control of her breathing.

"What happened? El!" Max exclaimed as she saw Eleven's nose was now bleeding.

"We...we need to call Steve" Eleven panted.

Steve paced around the backroom in Scoops, after having just got off the phone to Max and Eleven. Karmen was in trouble, he could feel it in his bones. He had to find her. All clues seemed to be leading to Heather's house so that's where he was going to go.

"You can't just leave! What about the Russian's? I think I've figured out the code-" Robin began, but Steve cut her off.

"My girlfriend is missing, Robin! I don't care about anything else but that!" Steve retorted.

"Those two weird girls said they were going to check up on her though, didn't they?" Robin pointed out.

"Their just kids. This could be serious" Steve shook his head.

"Why do you say that?" Robin frowned.

"It's Hawkins. Bad things always happen here" Steve sighed, running a hand through his hair.

"C'mon, we better go" Dustin announced, as he pushed through the door.

"Hold up, aren't you supposed to be out there? What about our customers?" Robin insisted.

"I've closed the shop" Dustin shrugged.

"You've what?! Great, now we're going to get fired" Robin groaned.

"So? Karmen's in trouble, that's-" Dustin started, but Robin cut him off.

"All that matters, yeah I know. But how do you know anything's wrong? Maybe she's just run off with this Billy guy?" Robin suggested.

"If you actually believe that then you really don't know Karmen," Steve told her, as he grabbed his bag.

"We'll be back tomorrow," Dustin told Robin, as he made his way towards the door.

"Hold up, where do you think you're going?" Steve announced, putting his hand on the smaller boy's shoulder.

"I'm coming with you, dude" Dustin insisted, as Steve shook his head.

"Absolutely not. This could be Mindflayer connected for all we know, and Karmen would kill me if anything happened to you. Actually...I'd kill me if anything happened to you" Steve admitted.

"That made no sense, Steve" Dustin stated.

"I know, I know. But you've got to stay on the bench for this one, man. I'll bring her home, I promise" Steve told him, as he ruffled Dustin's curly hair.

"Good luck" Robin offered, as she went to stand beside Dustin.

"Don't do anything until I get back, okay? Forget about those Russians!" Steve exclaimed, opening the back door.

"Will do" Dustin nodded.

"I'm serious! No Russians!" Steve insisted as he walked out the door.

"...So, what have you figured out about the code?" Dustin questioned, once the door closed, as Robin turned to him with a smirk.

Karmen's eyes snapped open, as she looked around herself in a panic. The last thing she could remember was being in a bathtub full of ice and Eleven looking down at her. Now she found herself sitting at a dinner table, with Billy and Heather sitting opposite her. She had lost time again. God knows what she had already done.

"Are you feeling okay, sweetie?" Heather questioned, tilting her head, in a way that Karmen now connected to the Mindflayer's body language.

"I'm...I'm fine" Karmen nodded, as she saw there were two adults sitting around the dinner table too.

"Will you come help me with the main course, Karmen?" Billy announced as he stood up from the table.

Karmen quickly nodded, not sure if she would be able to speak. She rushed into the kitchen after him, shaking as she looked around and tried to figure out where she was.

"Is it you?" Billy asked as he took her hands in his.

"Yeah, it's me. Are you...you again?" Karmen queried, as he nodded.

"I came back a couple of hours ago. Just as I was introducing myself to Heather's parents" Billy told her.

"I blacked out after you dragged me from your house..." Karmen trailed off, looking at the bruises on her arm.

"I did that to you?" Billy gaped, as he trailed his fingertips over the

bruise.

"It wasn't you. Not really" Karmen shook her head.

"Did I hurt my dad?" Billy gulped.

"You knocked him out. But he was alive" Karmen told him, as Billy breathed a sigh of relief.

"I was so angry when he hit you and then suddenly...I was gone" Billy sighed.

"Wait...that's it! I was terrified when you dragged me towards the car. That's why I blacked out! Emotions make you vulnerable. They let it get in" Karmen realised.

"So, whenever we get emotional, we're basically inviting it in?" Billy suggested.

"Yeah..." Karmen trailed off, as she felt a stinging pain in her ribs.

She pulled up her shirt and gasped when she saw black veins pulsing down her chest, lying just above her belly button now. It was growing by the second.

"Billy, I don't think we have a lot of time left" Karmen gulped.

"I know. I'm forgetting more and more. I can't even remember the name of this damn town anymore" Billy confessed.

"What do you think is going to happen when we can't remember anything? When the infection spreads fully? Do we just...stop?" Karmen asked.

"I don't know-" Billy's scared voice was cut off as the doorbell rang.

"God, what now?" Karmen groaned, as they cautiously made their way into the dining room.

The pair came to a halt when they spotted Eleven and Max standing in the middle of the room, dripping on the floor.

No. No. No.

Karmen realised the words repeating in her head weren't her own. They were Billy's. They couldn't let the girls get hurt.

"Max" Billy mumbled, looking like he had been punched in the gut.

"We didn't mean to barge in" Max replied.

"I'm sorry, who is this dripping in my living room right now?" Heather's father questioned.

"She's my sister" Billy announced, as Max frowned.

Billy had never even wanted to call her his stepsister in the past. The whole scene in front of her felt wrong. She noticed that Karmen still hadn't said anything.

"What are you doing here?" Billy inquired, as he made his way over to the pair.

"We just wanted to make sure everything was okay" Max informed him.

"Okay? Why wouldn't it be okay?" Billy stated, a strange look in his eyes, as Karmen came to stand beside him.

"I was worried about you," Eleven told Karmen, who avoided meeting her eyes.

"I'm fine. You two should really go. I'm sure Heather doesn't-" Karmen began, but the girl in question cut her off.

"Heather would love for you girls to stay actually...I'm sorry, I did not quite catch your name" Heather stated, her gaze on Eleven.

"El" Eleven replied, bluntly.

"El" Heather nodded, a dark tone to her voice.

"Why were you worried about Karmen?" Heather inquired, as she looked the girl up and down.

"I saw...I saw you..." Eleven trailed off, not sure what to say.

"We saw your manager at the pool. He said you guys didn't come into work today, so we got worried" Max explained.

"Karmen wasn't feeling so well today, so we thought we'd take the day off to nurse her back to health. But you're feeling just fine now, aren't you, Karmen?" Billy suggested, turning to the girl.

"I'm feeling so much better" Karmen nodded.

"Steve's worried about you" Eleven went on, as she could see Karmen visibly stiffen.

"Well, you can tell him I'm fine. C'mon, let's go" Karmen insisted, as she began ushering the girls out of the room.

"Nonsense. Why don't you girls stay? Have a cookie?" Heather grinned at them.

"They've really got to go. Their parents will be worried" Karmen retorted, pushing Eleven towards the door, as Billy did the same to his sister.

"We're not leaving you here. There's something wrong. I can feel it" Eleven exclaimed.

"El, please just go" Karmen begged.

"Everything alright out there?" Heather called, as the group stopped by the front door.

"Everything's fine!" Karmen replied.

"Go" Billy insisted, as he pulled the front door open.

"No. I know we didn't listen to you earlier, but we'll listen now" Eleven shook her head, as Karmen balled her hands into fists.

"It's too late to act like you care now, El. All you care about is your little boyfriend. So get out. I don't have time for you anymore" Karmen spat out, as she shoved Eleven through the door.

"Don't follow us again" Billy warned, as he slammed the door in the girl's faces.

Karmen's heart broke as she saw the hurt expression on Eleven's face. She let her head fall against the door, hating her own actions. She loved El, she was the whole reason Karmen had come to Hawkins. But right now Eleven needed to be as far away from her as possible.

"You said what you had to. It was the only way they'd leave" Billy suggested.

"It's more than that. I wanted to say it. For a split second...it felt like I hated her" Karmen confessed.

"That's just the Mindflayer speaking" Billy stated.

"I don't know where it ends, and I begin anymore" Karmen admitted.

"Is everything alright, honey?" Heather's mum interrupted, as she came to stand behind the pair.

"Everything's fine" Billy nodded.

"I'm just going to lie down. I'm feeling a little lightheaded..." Heather's mother trailed off, walking past them and towards the staircase.

Stop her. Stop her. Stop her.

Billy and Karmen shared a scared look as they both heard the command in their heads. Karmen could feel the black veins trailing over her body burn as she resisted.

"No...no..." She stuttered, as her nose started to bleed black blood.

Billy dropped to his knees as he cried out in pain, clutching his chest. He felt like he couldn't breathe.

"There's no point fighting it. There's not enough of you left" Heather announced, suddenly appearing beside them.

"Shut up" Karmen gritted her teeth, as she placed her hands on her

head.

"Just let go. You won't have to feel the pain anymore. The loneliness. You'll feel nothing" Heather went on.

"I said shut up!" Karmen screamed as the lights above her head blew.

"What's going on? I heard screaming?" Heather's mother rushed back down the stairs.

"N-nothing. We were just leaving" Karmen insisted, as she crouched down beside Billy.

"Billy?" Karmen questioned, as she turned him to look at her.

"Who...who are you?" Billy frowned, flinching away from her touch.

Karmen gasped as she saw the confusion in the boy's eyes. He had no idea who she was. In fact, it seemed like he had no idea where he was.

Take her. Take her. Take her.

The voice screamed in Karmen's head, as she fell against the front door. It hurt so bad, it felt like her head was going to explode. Billy turned to look up at Heather's mum, a dark look in his eyes.

"Billy, don't!" Karmen exclaimed, watching as he shoved Heather's mother into a nearby wall.

"It's too late. He's with me now" Heather informed her, as her voice mixed with a male.

The girl started to approach Karmen, her arms outstretched and a manic grin on her face.

"Join us" Heather smiled, only inches from Karmen now.

"No!" Karmen yelled as she kicked out, making the girl stumble backwards.

Her hands flew to the handle on the front door, as she ripped it open

and ran out into the rainy street. She didn't turn back as she heard screams from the house getting louder.

Memories began to flash in front of her eyes as she ran towards the Starcourt mall. Dustin. His toothy smile as she told him she'd be moving in that summer. How Eleven's face had lit up when she saw her for the first time in years. Billy's look of shock when she helped clean him up when his father had hit him. Steve looking down at her with worry when she had been hurt by the Demogorgon. Just as she realised, she was finally nearing the Starcourt Mall, after running for what felt like hours, she saw another memory. She was looking up at a pretty brunette, who had toys in her hands. Baby toys. She looked so familiar. Karmen stumbled into the Starcourt parking lot, which was almost abandoned at that time of night. Her eyes widened as she saw the boy she was looking for packing his car. She opened her mouth to shout his name but stopped when she realised she couldn't even remember it. He was important she knew that. She knew she loved him. Without needing any other knowledge, she began rushing towards him. Steve seemed to hear her coming, as he whipped his head around and frowned when he saw his girlfriend bounding towards him.

"Karmen?" He called out, as he jogged to meet her.

Even from far away he could see the terrified expression on her face. It seemed like she was running from someone. Or something.

Karmen practically threw herself into his arms, hugging him tightly as she did so. She was so scared. Steve wrapped his arms around her waist, as he could feel her trembling. Suddenly, she seemed to go limp against him, as he had to hold her upright to stop her from flopping to the ground.

"Hey, are you okay?" Steve questioned.

He couldn't see that the whites of her eyes had all but turned black, as dark veins spread underneath. She blinked and pulled away from him slowly, a strange expression on her face.

"Karmen?" Steve queried, touching her face lightly, as he brushed his

thumb against her cheek.

"...I'm okay. I'm just fine" Karmen smiled, as she tilted her head.

Complete. Complete. Complete.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! As you can see from the ending of this chapter, we've got some fun Flayed!Karmen scenes coming up soon. She's going to be a little different from her usual self. I apologise that this chapter has taken so long to come out but life's been really busy recently. What do you guys think of my take on the flayed? Please leave a review:)

NicoleR85: Aw, thank you! Billy really cares about her, but we'll have to wait and see with what happens with them now. As for Steve, my poor baby is going to go through a lot of shit in this season:(

1Demoness: Thank you so much! I've really enjoyed delving into Billy's possession more.

Guest: The real Karmen would never cheat on Steve...but flayed! Karmen could be a different story.

Amadues: Thanks for the review:) We'll have to wait and see whether there's enough of Karmen left to fight against the Mindflayer, let's hope for Steve's sake there is!

Min234: Thank you for the review! I always felt like Billy would have been different if he had someone who really cared about him. Don't worry, Steve/Karmen are still endgame, and always will be:)

Angryfanfic: Thanks for this review:) Don't worry, Steve will always be the one for the real Karmen.

Sitowitz: Thank you so much! Glad you've enjoyed the story so far, and hope this chapter lives up to your expectations:)

36. The New Host

Steve frowned at his girlfriend's odd expression, her eyes almost seemed out of focus, and her cheeks were freezing.

"You're so cold...what happened?" Steve questioned.

"I just got myself a little freaked out. It's nothing, really" Karmen shrugged, pulling away from his embrace.

"What happened? Eleven saw you in the upside down...she said something bad had happened to you" Steve informed her, as Karmen opened and closed her mouth a few times like she wasn't sure what to say.

"I'm fine. No reason to worry" Karmen insisted, noticing that Steve didn't seem convinced.

"Whatever El saw, she got it wrong. No need to worry" Karmen stated, taking his hands in hers.

"I always worry about you" Steve admitted, as Karmen gave him a smile that seemed forced.

"Some would say that's a character flaw" Karmen teased, as Steve huffed out a laugh.

"Others would say it's just because I love you" Steve grinned.

The grin slowly fell from his face as Karmen looked at him with confusion. He opened his mouth to ask her what was wrong when she suddenly leaned forward and pressed her lips against his. Karmen's movements were far more forceful than usual, her hands pulling his hair lightly, earning a soft moan to fall from Steve's lips. Just as Steve's hands had settled on her waist, Karmen pulled away, as Steve's eyes slowly fluttered open. Karmen felt a spark of emotion as she looked into his brown eyes. Just as quickly as it was there, it was gone. She tried to hold onto the feeling, but it was buried too deep inside of her.

"What was that for?" He questioned, as Karmen kept her arms

wrapped around his shoulders.

"Let's go back to your place" Karmen announced, confusing Steve.

"My parents will be home in the morning" Steve pointed out.

"Then I'll sneak out the window. C'mon, let's just spend some time together. Alone" Karmen said, with a mischievous smile.

"I better tell the others that you're alright-" Steve started, but Karmen cut him off with a chaste kiss.

"They can wait until the morning" Karmen smirked, as she all but dragged him towards his car.

"They'll be worried. El especially" Steve exclaimed, as Karmen grit her teeth.

"Don't you want to spend time with me?" She asked, making Steve sigh.

"Of course, I do" Steve replied, as he opened the passenger door for her, as gentlemanly as ever.

"Then let's go" Karmen insisted, crouching down to get into the passenger seat.

Steve frowned as he closed her door, wondering why she seemed so insistent on not telling the others. Karmen would never want to leave Eleven worrying...and the way that she was running towards him earlier...he was sure she had been running from something.

Later that night, Steve was awoken by a loud thunderclap from nearby. He had always hated storms and reached out for Karmen, but his arms found nothing. He rubbed his eyes, sitting upright in his bed, finding that she was nowhere to be found.

"Karmen?" He called out, looking around his dark bedroom.

"Karmen!" Steve announced, as he pushed himself up from the bed and started to search around his large house.

"What the hell?" He mumbled when he noticed his front door was wide open, rain beginning to get in.

He rushed over to close the door, as a bad feeling settled in his stomach. Where was she? It made no sense. She had been the one who wanted to spend the night together, now it seemed as soon as he fell asleep, she had gone. Steve jumped slightly as a flash of lightning lit up the room, as he noticed one of the cupboard doors in his kitchen was open. Cautiously, he made his way over, wondering what Karmen had been looking for. He frowned when he saw there was nothing inside apart from cleaning supplies. His frown deepened when he saw the lid was off a bottle of bleach. What was going on, Steve thought to himself.

Karmen and Billy watched as Heather finished tying up her parents, clearly not caring how rough she was being. The two adults looked worse for wear, but their bodies would still be able to take on a full transmission. Karmen found that even though there was a connection between her own mind and Heather's, the other girl was only apart of the hive mind now. She couldn't create any thoughts of her own. She was all but dead. A walking corpse. Karmen wondered how close she and Billy were to being like her.

"How many people have been infected now?" Karmen inquired.

"Including us? Fifteen" Billy replied.

"It's not enough" Karmen mumbled.

"We'll find more bodies. We still have time" Billy insisted.

"People will start to notice" Karmen pointed out, as Billy turned to her.

"Notice what?" Billy questioned.

"That there's something wrong with us" Karmen answered.

"Not if we stick to the plan" Billy shook his head.

"Acting like normal? That's easy for you to say. I used to care about

people so much...El, Steve...you..." Karmen trailed off, with a frown.

"And now?" Billy inquired, tilting his head.

"I don't feel anything anymore. I just feel...cold, all the time" Karmen admitted, a blank expression on her face.

It wasn't entirely true. She had felt something earlier with Steve, but it wasn't enough to cause any doubts in her mind. She had a mission, that was all that mattered.

"This will all be over soon. I promise" Billy told her, placing his finger under her chin to look her in the eyes.

Karmen's head snapped to the side as she heard terrified cries coming from nearby and saw that Heather's parents had woken up. Her father strained against the ropes around his hands, his eyes widening as Heather walked over to them.

"Hi Daddy" Heather exclaimed, taking away the tie that had been covering his mouth.

"Heather...sweetie...whatever this is, whatever they've got you into, you don't have to do this. You can stop this" He pleaded, glaring at Billy and Karmen.

"There is no stopping it, daddy. You'll see" Heather retorted, stroking his face lightly.

Billy then crouched beside Heather's mother, pulling the rag away from her mouth, allowing her to speak. He almost rolled his eyes as she begged her daughter to let them go and pressed his finger against her lips.

"Try not to move," Billy told her, a hint of sympathy in his voice.

"You don't need to be scared. You're going to be like us. You won't be afraid anymore" Karmen told them, as Billy came to stand beside her.

"Heather!" Her father sobbed as they all turned simultaneously around.

None of them turned back as they heard the Mindflayer snarl and take a step forward, hearing Heather's parents begin to scream. Heather kept walking, not even flinching at the blood-curdling screams. Karmen on the other hand, shut her eyes as the screaming suddenly stopped, as she could practically feel them being infected. She felt Billy's hand wrapping around hers and turned to look at him. There was a flash of fear over his face before it was covered by a mask of blankness a moment later. There was still some part of them both inside, no matter how deep it was buried.

Steve almost jumped out of his skin as he heard a door slam from downstairs, gripping his baseball bat tightly in his hand. He hadn't slept at all since Karmen had disappeared, watching the storm settle and the sunrise. Now it sounded as if someone had forced their way in downstairs. He quietly opened his bedroom door and started to rush down the stairs, hoping to catch whoever it was by surprise.

"Karmen?" He gaped when he saw her standing by the sink with her back to him.

She had a bleach bottle in her hand, the same one that Steve had found earlier that morning. She slowly placed it down on the kitchen counter and wiped her mouth, turning around.

"Since when do you play baseball?" She inquired, tilting her head.

"I...it was a Christmas present from dad last year. He thought it was baseball I played, not basketball" Steve answered.

"Huh" Karmen shrugged, taking a step towards him.

She noticed he took a step back when she did this and raised an eyebrow at him. Her eyes dropped to the baseball bat he was still holding onto.

"What's wrong?" She asked confusion etched on her face.

"What's wrong? Karmen, you disappeared! Where the hell have you been?" Steve pointed out, dropping the baseball bat.

"I went for a walk" Karmen replied.

"At two in the morning? In the middle of a thunderstorm?" Steve questioned.

"I couldn't sleep" Karmen shrugged.

"You are acting very strangely" Steve informed her.

"I'm fine" Karmen shook her head.

"No, you're not! Just tell me what's going on...please!" Steve exclaimed, walking towards her and taking her hands in his own.

"I think you should get out of Hawkins" Karmen announced, as Steve looked at her dumbfounded.

"...What?" He asked.

"Go see your grandparents maybe? It'll be the end of summer before you know it, and then-" Karmen began, but he cut her off.

"I can't just leave. What about my job?" Steve pointed out.

"I'm sure they can find another ice cream scooper" Karmen retorted.

"My parents would never allow it" Steve shook his head.

"Oh, fuck your parents. Who cares what they think! Just...I really think you should leave" Karmen insisted, squeezing his hands.

"Why does it sound like you wouldn't be coming with me?" Steve frowned.

"Because I wouldn't be" Karmen admitted, as Steve scoffed.

"You really think I'd go anywhere without you? Jesus, Karmen, I flunked my exams just so I could stay in Hawkins with you..." Steve trailed off when he realised what he had said.

"What?" Karmen gasped.

"I...I couldn't leave you. You'd find someone else and I...I couldn't bear that" Steve confessed, a guilty expression on his face.

"I would have waited for you," Karmen told him, with sad eyes.

"We can-" Steve began, but was cut off as the phone started to ring.

"Don't answer it" Karmen insisted, holding tightly onto his hands.

"It could be important" Steve stated, as Karmen gripped onto his hands roughly.

"Please, just leave it!" Karmen exclaimed, making Steve frown.

"This is a code red. I repeat this a code red! Steve, do you copy?" Mike's voice could be heard from upstairs, as Karmen guessed he was using the walkie talkie.

"I have to answer" Steve told her, pulling his hands away, as Karmen grit her teeth angrily.

"So, what did they say exactly?" Karmen asked, as Steve parked out of the Wheeler's house.

"Not much. Just that it was a code red about the Mindflayer and we both needed to get over here ASAP" Steve replied, as Karmen nodded and went to open the car door.

"Hey, do you remember last time we fought the Mindflayer, in those tunnels?" Steve began, as Karmen turned to look at him.

"Yeah?" She questioned, ushering for him to elaborate.

"Do you remember what you said to me down there?" Steve inquired.

"There was a lot going on, Steve. We were kind of running for our lives most of that night" Karmen explained.

"Yeah, but it was the first time you said something to me" Steve insisted, as Karmen looked at him blankly.

"You really don't remember?" Steve frowned.

How could Karmen have forgotten the first time she said she loved

him? It was one of the best moments of Steve's life. It made no sense. He opened his mouth to speak, when suddenly there was a bang on the car window, making him jump.

"Get out of there, dipshits. We've got to talk!" Mike announced.

Mike quickly ushered the pair towards his basement, as they saw that all the kids were their par Dustin. Karmen watched as Eleven looked away from her the moment she walked down the stairs, refusing to meet her eyes. Karmen felt even colder than usual as she could see the hurt in Eleven's body language.

"Hey El" Karmen greeted, with a small smile.

"We weren't sure you'd turn up after yesterday" Max pointed out.

"About that...I'm really sorry. Billy and I got it into our heads that Heather had been possessed by the Mindflyer. I know, it's crazy-" Karmen started, but Lucas cut her off.

"Wait! Heather's been taken over by the Mindflyer?" He gaped.

"No. We were wrong. I tested her. She didn't react. I'm so sorry for what I said, El. I swear I didn't mean any of it. I just wanted to get you out of harm's way" Karmen told her, bending the truth to what suited her.

"You don't need to protect me" Eleven muttered.

"I know. I really am sorry. Forgive me?" Karmen asked.

"Friends forgive friends" El nodded, as Karmen smiled at her softly.

"How exactly did you test Heather?" Mike inquired, still not convinced.

"I held a knife over the grill for a couple of minutes and then burnt her with it. No reaction...Well apart from the normal reaction of getting burnt. She's fine" Karmen explained.

"Didn't she wonder why you were burning her?" Will asked.

"I said it was an accident. You know what Heather's like, always been a bit of an airhead. I don't think she thought anything of it" Karmen shrugged.

"You never told me any of this" Steve frowned.

"It didn't seem important" Karmen retorted, as Steve bit his lip, obviously wanting to say more but decided against it.

"Karmen, uh...I think we owe you an apology" Max announced, grabbing her attention.

"Why?" Karmen questioned.

"You might have been right. We think the Mindflayer could be back" Lucas informed her, as Karmen tried to look as shocked as possible.

"How would that even be possible?" Steve inquired.

"I can explain...This is him. The Mindflayer..." Will trailed off, as he drew a picture of the monster with black crayon.

"But, that day on the field, a part of him attached itself to me" Will went on, wiping his hand over the crayon, getting some of it on his hand.

"My mom got it out of me...and Eleven closed the gate. But the part that was still in me, what if it's still in our world? In Hawkins" Will suggested, flipping the paper around and pressing his hand onto the paper, showing a dark smudge.

"I don't understand. The Demodogs died when El closed the gate. If the brain dies, the body dies" Max pointed out.

"We can't take any chances. We need to assume the worst. The Mind Flayer's back" Mike announced.

"That's a lot of what-ifs, guys. Don't you think you might be overreacting?" Karmen exclaimed.

"You were the one who thought something was wrong in the first place" Max frowned.

"Yeah, and I was wrong. I just don't want to make the same mistake twice" Karmen answered.

"If he is back, he'd want to attach himself to someone again. A new me" Will told them, as Karmen felt a shiver go down her spine.

"A new host" Lucas nodded.

"You thought it was in Billy" Max mumbled, concern flashing over her face.

"I spent the whole day with him. Trust me, its' not Billy" Karmen shook her head.

"Yeah, but you've always been a little....easily swayed by Billy" Mike suggested, as Karmen rolled her eyes.

"You're not going to drop this, are you?" Karmen theorised, as all the kids shook their heads.

"Let's go then" Karmen announced, walking towards the stairs.

"Where?" El inquired, following her, nonetheless.

"I'm going to prove to you that Billy hasn't been flayed" Karmen exclaimed.

"I don't know. He looks pretty normal to me" Max stated, using binoculars to spy on Billy who was currently at the poolside.

"Normal? How many times have you seen him with a shirt on?" Mike pointed out, indicating to the thick sweater, hat and sunglasses Billy was wearing.

"I mean, it's a little weird" Max admitted.

"More than a little. He was in a tub with ice. The Mind Flayer likes it cold. Plus everything else" Mike insisted.

"But he's lounging at the pool, which is, like, the least Mind Flayer thing ever" Max retorted.

"Not necessarily. The Mind Flayer likes to hide. He only used me when he needed me. It's like...like you're dormant. And then, when he needs you, you're activated" Will explained, as Karmen thought about this.

Will was so wrong. They weren't just dormant anymore. It was like they were apart of the Mindflayer now. Like evil clones who only had one goal. To serve and protect the Mindflayer. It was all she could think about it. Just the kids threatening to stop the Mindflayer was enough to have her balling her hands into fists. She needed to find away to stop them...before she had to do something she'd regret.

"Look, I'll go over and talk to him. See if he's acting weird" Karmen announced, taking a step away from the group.

"What?! No way, it's too dangerous!" Steve cried, holding onto her arm.

"I'll be fine. Don't worry" Karmen replied, pressing a chaste kiss to his lips.

Steve reluctantly let go of her arm, knowing it was a fight he wasn't going to win. He watched as Karmen made her way towards Billy, who seemed to sense she was there before he had even seen her.

"Do you guys...do you..." Steve stuttered, not sure if he wanted to speak up or not.

"What?" Will asked as the kids all turned to the Steve.

"Do you think there's something wrong with Karmen? She's been acting kind of...off recently" Steve told them.

"Not really" Lucas shrugged.

"She hasn't even asked where Dustin is. Don't you think that's weird?" Steve pointed out.

"I guess..." Max trailed off.

"Hey, she's approaching him" Mike stated, as he grabbed the binoculars from Max, who looked annoyed at the move.

"How much do they know?" Billy questioned, as Karmen stopped beside the lifeguard's chair.

"Enough to know you're the new host. They're going to want to test you. They won't take my word for it" Karmen informed him.

"This could work in our favour" Billy pondered, as Karmen looked at to him with a frown.

"How?" She asked.

"They'll think they're making a trap for me...but really it'll be a trap for them" Billy explained.

"They don't suspect me yet. I'll find out what I can" Karmen told him, as she went to step away.

"You could have already taken Eleven, you have the element of surprise. Why haven't you?" Billy inquired, tilting his head towards her.

"She's powerful. I might not be able to take her on my own" Karmen answered.

"And that's all?" Billy insisted.

"When the time comes...I'll kill her myself if I have to" Karmen announced, turning on her feet to walk away.

The moment the words left her lips she felt a spark of...something. Some sort of emotion that was buried so deep it almost wasn't there. Just like when she had kissed Steve. Maybe there was still a part of her old self left.

The plan was quickly set into motion. They waited until everyone else had gone home, leaving only Billy who went to have his usual shower after work. While he was there the kids worked on blocking all his exits and setting up a dummy with a walkie talkie attached, to lure him into the sauna. Karmen had been surprised when she had heard the Mindflyer in her mind telling her to let things play out. The kid's plan went off without a hitch, as Billy stormed into the

sauna, pulling the dummy from the ceiling, as Eleven popped out from a nearby cupboard. She quickly used her telekinesis to close the door, as everyone else ran out to use chains to lock him inside. After a few minutes of angrily banging on the door, screaming to let him out, Billy slumped to the floor. Steve was surprised to see Karmen looking emotionless towards someone she cared about in so much distress. It wasn't until they heard a strange sound from inside the sauna, that she seemed to come out of her trance. It sounded like Billy was...crying.

"It's not my fault. It's not my fault, Max. I promise you, it's not my fault" Billy sobbed, as Max cautiously walked towards the door.

Karmen's mouth fell open as she realised it wasn't the Mindflayer speaking anymore. It was the real Billy. The Mindflayer must have given him complete temporary control over his body.

"What's not your fault, Billy?" Max inquired, seeing him slumped on the floor, holding his hands in a prayer gesture.

"I've done things, Max. Really bad things. I didn't mean to. He made me do it" Billy cried, tears dripping down his cheeks.

"Who made you do it?" Max questioned

"I don't know, it's like a shadow. Like a giant shadow. Please, Max" Billy begged, as Karmen found it hard to listen to.

"What did he make you do?" Max insisted as a tear dropped down her own cheek.

"It's not my fault, okay? Max, please. Please, believe me, Max, it's not my fault. I tried to stop him, okay? I did" Billy sniffled, as he fell against the nearby bench, scrunching his eyes shut.

"Billy, it's gonna be okay," Max told him, placing her hand on the glass.

"Where's...where's Karmen? Is she with you?" Billy inquired, as Karmen stiffened next to Steve.

"Yeah, she's here" Max nodded, as Billy suddenly lunged towards the

door.

"You have to stay away from her, Max! You can't trust her, she's-" Billy cut off midsentence, his head flopping down.

Max gasped as the lock on the chains fell to the ground, with a loud bang. Karmen looked at the rest of the group, happy to see that no one had noticed her raising her hand to send an electric pulse towards the door, breaking the lock.

"Max, get away from the door!" Mike yelled.

Max's head snapped up to see Billy staring at her, deep black veins pulsing all over his chest, and his eyes almost completely black. She rushed backwards just in time as Billy ran into the door, pushing it off its hinges. He slowly stood back up from where he had fallen to the ground, glaring at Eleven, who had pushed everyone behind her. With an angry look in her eyes, Eleven raised her hand out, using her telekinesis to pick up a nearby weight and threw it towards the teenage boy. Eleven let out a scream as she used all the power she had to keep Billy in place, who was straining against the metal weight. Steve watched in horror as the weights began to break the wall behind Billy, showing just how much strength Eleven could muster. It seemed like Eleven would win the fight easily. Suddenly a large electrical pulse threw Eleven off her feet, as she rolled to the floor, the arm of her top in tatters. The kids and Steve all turned to see Karmen standing only a metre away, her hand raised out.

"Karmen...what are you doing?" Steve exclaimed as Karmen stormed towards the teenage girl on the floor.

Billy threw the weight that was no longer holding him in place towards the rest of the group, as Steve ducked, just missing being hit by the weight.

"El!" Mike cried as he watched Karmen grab Eleven roughly by her hair.

Karmen turned to the group, a sinister smile on her face, as they could now see black veins spreading up her neck and down her arms. Eleven let out a cry as Karmen suddenly wrapped her hand over the

younger girl's neck.

"Goodbye Eleven" Karmen announced, choking the life out of the girl she had once considered her sister.

Author's Notes: I hope you all enjoyed this chapter! I love a good cliffhanger, you guys should know this by now. Thought I should explain that Karmen is really not in control right now, the real Karmen would never hurt El. Please leave a review:)

NicoleR85: Aw, thank you! I hope you like this chapter too:)

RoseAmeliaSarahNoblePond: Thank you so much:) Hopefully Karmen and everyone will survive this, but we'll just have to wait and see. I'm really glad you're enjoying this!

Angryfanfic: Thank you, I hope you like this chapter!

tazsgirl696: Here's the next chapter, enjoy:)

Stranger Things: Uh oh, you definitely will want to do that after this chapter! Please remember Karmen isn't in control right now though, haha.